

The Battle of Trillemarka

*A Study of Narratives Related to the Conservation of
Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve with Focus on
Economic Instruments and Legitimacy*

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Takk!

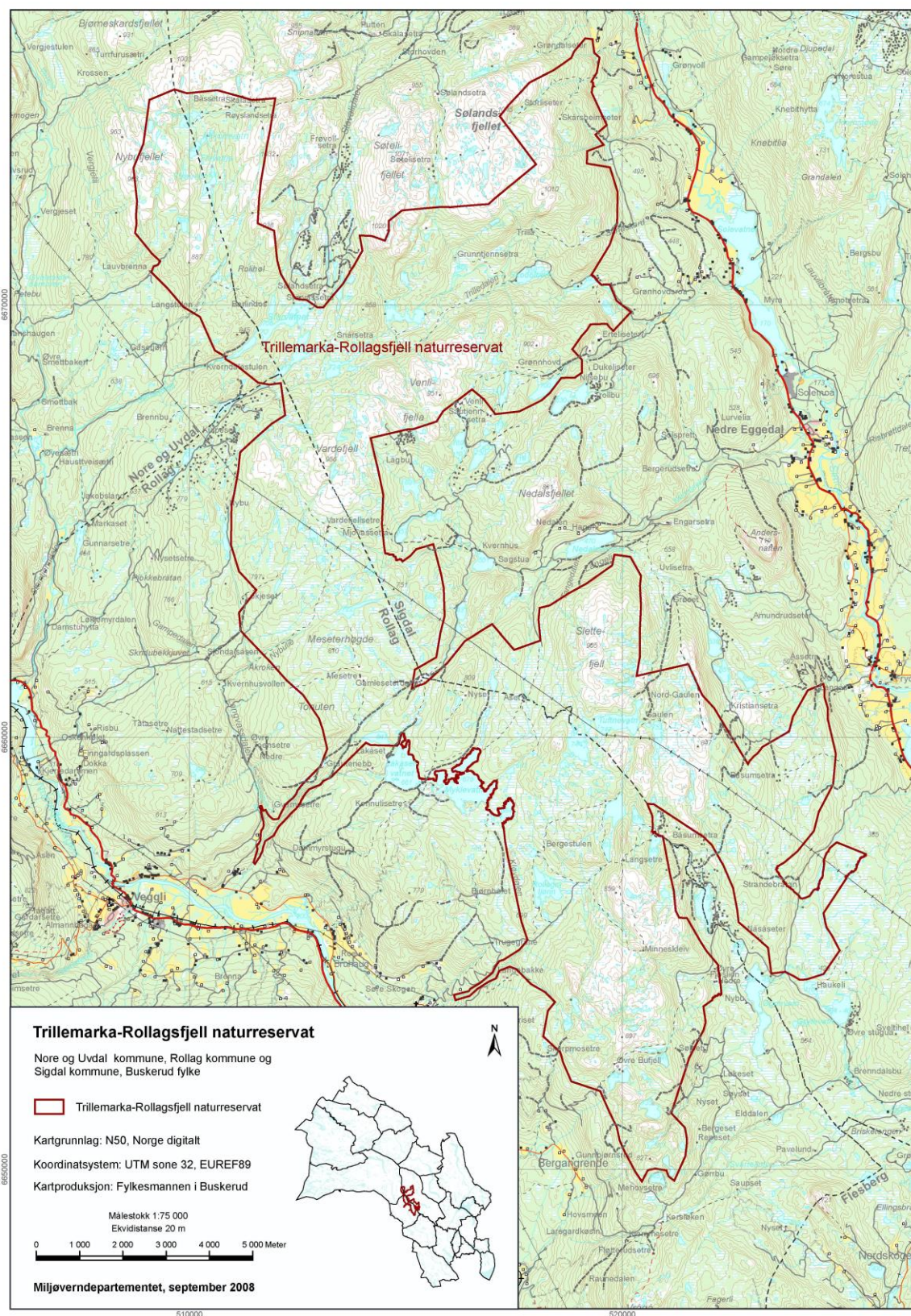
Marte Guttulsrød

Oslo, July 2013

Maps of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell



Map 1: Map of Norway with Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve outlined.
(modified version of map by © Kartverket)



Map 2: Map of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve. Source: Ministry of the Environment, September 2008

1. Introduction

Actually, I think logging timber is a good thing to do, because it [timber] is a resource which should be harvested. I've been thinking that if I were a tree, I would want to be used for something nice. Becoming a castle or something! (F#34, one of my local informants)

As part of the rapid increase in conservation of Norwegian forests since the 1990's, Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve was inaugurated on 8 December 2008. Situated between the valleys Sigdal and Numedal at the heart of Buskerud County, it represents the largest forest reserve in the country (as per July 2013). It is so far the last area to be conserved through government mandated conservation, and it represents one of the most controversial conservation processes in Norway (County Governor of Buskerud 2005:9). Prior to the inauguration, conservationists¹ argued that Trillemarka represented Norway's last area of contiguous old-growth forest of significant size (Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature 2007). Some conservationists applied words such as "pristine" and "untouched" when referring to parts of the area. These descriptions represent one of the aspects of a polarized and heated debate prior to the conservation. The local population and other sympathizers with a utilitarian view on nature accused the conservationists for exaggeration and even lying in their descriptions of Trillemarka. This claim was based on the area's history of extensive logging and transhumance since the 1600's. My local informants repeatedly claimed that "the best conservation is through use" whereas informants among the conservationists perceived this as a utopian claim. The conflict between conservationists and user groups in Trillemarka reflects the classic conflict between conservation and use in nature management. Conservationists tend to present conservation as a win-win situation for both biodiversity and local interests. Some perceive human activities as a threat towards biodiversity. Local user groups, on the other hand, often portray conservationists as arrogant and ignorant of how it really is to live close to 'nature'. Their views often tend to be overrun by conservationist arguments in national media.

¹ Conservationists will in this thesis also be referred to as external informants and non-local informants.

The percentage of total land areas conserved through the Norwegian Nature Diversity Act has increased from 6 to almost 15 % from 1992 to 2010 (Svarstad 2009:34). Forests cover about 40 % of the Norwegian land area of which only about 10 % are owned by the state or municipalities. The rest is owned privately or by local common property institutions. Two thirds of biodiversity in Norway is related to forests (County Governor of Buskerud 2005:9). Norway has signed a number of international treaties and conventions committing ourselves to conservation of biodiversity, e.g. the Convention of Biodiversity from 1993 (Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management 2012).

Currently about 2.7 % of productive forests in Norway are protected (Ministry of the Environment 2013), while a much cited biological evaluation recommend 4.5 % as a minimum to achieve goals of biodiversity and a representative selection of forests (Framstad *et al.* 2002). One of the main challenges in Norway today is to create incentives for private forest owners to take biodiversity into account, beyond what they would otherwise do, in their forestry and other land-use activities (Policymix 2013b).

In order to compensate for conserved private forests in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, the affected forest owners were granted a one-time economic compensation calculated on the basis of standing timber on the property in question. In 2009, the government also decided to allocate 30 million NOK in the form of a Local Business Development Fund to the three affected municipalities over the course of five years.

1.1 Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis was to explore local perceptions on the establishment of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve in 2012, the current situation as well as the role of economic incentives for potential changes in experienced legitimacy.

My three final research questions are the following:

-
- How do local people tend to narrate the conservation and establishment of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve in comparison with how they perceive the current situation in 2012?
 - Does local narrative production reflect an enhanced legitimacy due to economic benefits that were brought in on late stages? Why or why not?
 - Why is the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment so different from the Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive Elements on the same topic?

1.2 Limitations and Relation to Other Research

This thesis is part of the research project ‘POLICYMIX’ which runs from 2010-2014. The project is co-funded by the European Commission, Directorate General for Research, within the 7th Framework Programme of RTD, Theme 2 – Biotechnology, Agriculture & Food. “POLICYMIX aims to contribute to achieving the EUs goals of reversing trends in biodiversity loss beyond 2010 through the use of cost-effective and incentive-compatible economic instruments” (Policymix 2013b). In the case of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, the project aims to improve our understanding of the links between social impacts, legitimacy and forest conservation effectiveness and efficiency. Indeed, Policymix aims at assessing the role of economic instruments in policy mixes for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services provision. Ecosystem services refer to the multitude of human benefits supplied by nature, i.e.

provisioning services such as food, water, timber, and fiber; *regulating services* that affect climate, floods, disease, wastes, and water quality; *cultural services* that provide recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits; and *supporting services* such as soil formation, photosynthesis, and nutrient cycling (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005:V).

POLICYMIX is an interdisciplinary, collaborative research project involving several Latin-American and European research institutes. In Norway, the research is conducted by researchers at the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA).

Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell cannot be claimed to be fully representative for Norwegian forest management as there so far (July 2013) has been no other examples of government mandated forest conservation in Norway after 2008. The government has expressed a will to continue focusing on Voluntary Conservation Agreements in the future, although the possibility of future government mandated conservation processes cannot be entirely excluded (Ministry of the Environment 2012).

Particularly my local informants (e.g. F#6, F#12, M#13, M#14) explicitly approved of my method of data collection with in-depth semi-structured interviews. They expressed gratitude for providing them with an opportunity to make their voices heard, and hoped for future conservation processes to be conducted in a more including and fair manner than what they felt had been the case for Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell.

1.3 Thesis Outline and Interdisciplinarity

This thesis consists of six interrelated chapters. In this first chapter, I have introduced the research questions as well as the purpose of the thesis. The second chapter will outline the theoretical framework, where narrative analysis will be introduced. In chapter 3, I present the study area and methodology. Then, I proceed to present findings from the narrative analysis (chapter 4). Subsequently I compare two different narratives from my findings and explore why the local population of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell presented a Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment (chapter 5). In the last section of chapter 5, I will attempt explaining why this Local Narrative is so different from the Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive Elements on the same topic. Finally, I will provide some concluding remarks.

Interdisciplinary research is both fashionable and controversial, yet its meaning is still contested. According to the economist Desmond McNeill, some scholars refer to the concept of interdisciplinarity as solely involving “people from different disciplines working in parallel, or even in series, with little or no interaction between them” (1999:314). Jantsch in OECD 1972 defines the strict term of ‘inter-disciplinary’ as a “formulation of a uniform, discipline-transcending terminology or common methodology; cooperation within a common framework shared by the disciplines involved” (after McNeill 1999:314). It is, however, common to apply the term ‘interdisciplinary’ when referring to both the strict term of inter-disciplinary *and* the broader concepts of multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary research. For the sake of clarity, this will also be the case for my thesis.

Sociological perspectives on narrative analysis constitute the main approach of this study. The emerging discipline of political ecology has also been an important source of inspiration. Political ecology embraces the studies of “power relations in land and environmental management at various geographical levels, from the local via the national to the global, and on the interlinkages between these levels” (Benjaminsen *et al.* 2009:425).

Research on forest management ranging from the disciplines of economy, biology, sociology, human geography and social anthropology have all been important sources of information and perspectives for this thesis. I acknowledge that paying particular attention to academic rigour and depth is crucial while conducting interdisciplinary research. Policymix’ interdisciplinary project group has been an important academic support throughout the whole process.

2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will provide an overview of theoretical approaches and concepts related to the research topic. The chapter includes three major parts: 1) theoretical approaches to narrative theory and analysis, 2) discursive narratives and presentation of discourse types on conservation, and 3) a theoretical framework on distributional, procedural and sense of justice. Finally, I will summarize and briefly describe how theory will be applied further in this thesis. I have based most of this chapter on research by three central scholars within sociological narrative research: Anna Johansson, Jane Elliot and Hanne Svarstad.

2.1 Theoretical Approaches to Narrative Theory and Analysis

Narrative research consists of a diversity of theories and approaches. The psychologist Elliot G. Mishler argues that narrative analysis should be seen as a specific research area within a broader field of research, rather than as a unified discipline (1995). Furthermore, narrative research can be characterized as interdisciplinary, since “narrative crosses the usual disciplinary boundaries and has been taken up as a useful analytic tool by researchers with very diverse background” (Elliott 2005:7). Narrative theory and analysis is applied in disciplines ranging from sociology, history, linguistics, literature, ethnology, psychology and anthropology (Johansson 2005).

According to Johansson (2005:32-3), discursive perspectives are often divided into two main categories: linguistic and sociological. Linguistic discursive perspectives often focus on the use of language itself. One of the linguistic definitions of the concept of *discourse* is “a stretch of language that may be longer than one sentence. Thus, text and discourse analysis is about how sentences combine to form text” (Salkie 1995, referred to in Svarstad 2009:37). Narratives are here perceived as one of many sources of knowledge about our social reality (Johansson 2005:18). When conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews in Trillemarka, it was crucial to

integrate social context, coherence of stories as well as content of the interviews in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the narratives which have been produced. A linguistic discursive approach would therefore not have been suitable for my fieldwork.

On the other hand, we have the sociological or social science-based discursive perspective. This perspective is labelled as ontological by the social psychologist Lars-Christer Hydén (1997), and narratives are here perceived as a fundamental and universal type of knowledge. Narratives are perceived as the very nature and quintessential representation of our social reality (ibid). The philosopher Michel Foucault has contributed with an important influence on this perspective with his focus on inherent power structure in discourses (e.g. 1993, after Johansson 2005:33). Indeed, discourses consist of speech constructing “the universal truth” about humans, society and nature, hence representing social power (ibid). Social science-based discursive perspectives are concerned with perceptions on specific topics in specific social contexts framing what we communicate and interpret as “real” and “true” (Svarstad 2009:37). When discussing narratives, narrative theory and analysis in this thesis, I will rely on a social science-based discursive perspective.

Conducting narrative analysis implies giving *interpretation* and *reflexivity* a central role (Johansson 2005:27). Narrative analysis requires a systematic interpretation of other people’s interpretations of themselves and their respective social world. As a researcher, we have to ask ourselves: “What does this narrative mean?” The reflexive aspect of narrative analysis consist in researchers interpreting our own construction of knowledge as well as our own interpretations (ibid:28). Following Johansson (ibid), the sociologists Michael Hammersly and Paul Atkinson argue that social sciences comprise an inherent reflexive character (1993). As researchers, we have to acknowledge that we are indeed part of the social world that we are studying. Narrative analysis therefore represents both an interpretive and a reflexive activity.

Bringing in the philosopher Jacques Derrida (1998), Johansson (2005:161) suggests that poststructuralist perspectives may represent an important tool while analysing narratives’ presentation of actors. Derrida argues that Western systems of knowledge are based on hierarchical, binary categories in which one possesses power and the other one represents marginalization and exclusion. The categories of man versus woman, modernity versus tradition and culture versus nature may serve as illustrative

examples (ibid). In line with Derrida's theory, Svarstad (2009:48) has examined patterns for how actors involved in conservation processes are portrayed in respectively win-win and traditionalist discourses. She argues that all the actors in win-win discourses are more or less perceived as "heroes", whereas traditionalist discourse types tend to portray external conservation forces as "villains", making life hard for the affected local population (i.e. the "victims"). Hence, win-win narratives seem to ignore the asymmetric relationship between local and external actors, whereas traditionalist narratives underline the hierarchical character of binary categories (ibid). This constitutes an important theoretical insight for the discussion of my local informants' narrative in relation to the external narrative in Chapter 5.

In order to understand the different approaches to narrative analysis, Mishler (1995, referred to in Elliott 2005:38) suggest that we focus on three different functions of the language; namely *meaning*, *structure* and *interactional context*. Meaning refers to the actual events and experiences, i.e. the content of the narrative. Here, researchers pay attention to past events, as well as the actual meaning of those events for the involved actors. The structure refers to the form of the narrative, i.e. the way the story is put together. Lastly, interactional context refers to the performance of narratives, i.e. "the interactional and institutional contexts in which narratives are produced, recounted and consumed" (Elliott 2005:38). Within the local narrative presented in this thesis, I found that marginalization and pragmatic adjustment represent the two main themes. The way local informants portrayed conservationists, exemplifies form. Interactional and institutional contexts in this thesis are illustrated by conflict axes such as urban versus rural and local versus expert knowledge. In Trillemarka, a widespread sense of on-going marginalization of the local communities due to the growing power of urban elites, are examples of interactional and institutional contexts.

During my fieldwork, I tried to pay attention to both meaning, structure and the interactional context of the narratives. In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the narratives presented to me, it was essential to understand the interdependent relationship between these three functions.

2.1.1 Defining Narratives

There has been a long literary tradition of studying the art of narrative. In this thesis, the focus will be on sociological narrative analysis. Despite on-going controversies as to the sociological definition of a narrative, Elliot suggests Hinchman and Hinchman's definition:

Narratives (stories) in the human sciences should be defined provisionally as discourses with a clear sequential order that connects events in a meaningful way for a definite audience and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it. (Hinchman and Hinchman 1997, after Elliot 2005:3)

From this definition, we can distinguish three main features of narratives. First, they are *chronological*, i.e. representations of sequences of events. In *Poetics*, Aristotle defined narratives as "a story with a beginning, a middle and an end" (referred to in Elliot 2005:7). Linked to chronology is temporality, i.e. the state of existing within or having some relationship with time, and causality, i.e. the interconnection of events from a beginning to an end (Johansson 2005:124). Second, narratives are *meaningful*, and third, they are "inherently social in that they are *produced for a specific audience*" (Elliot 2005:4). In order to trace when the social sciences' growing interest in narrative occurred, Elliot points to Daniel Bertaux's edited collection 'Biography and Society' from 1981 where Bertaux encouraged more attention to individual stories in sociology (Elliot 2005:5). Bertaux's background was the lack of lay interest in sociology, as compared to for instance history. This, he argued, was mainly due to the dry presentational style of much sociological work. Increased use of stories in sociology could help spurring more interest, he claimed.

Elliot also emphasizes that rearranging the events within a narrative typically results in a change of meaning (2005:6). Indeed, the plot is central in narratives. Svarstad perceives the course of events as well as the actor gallery as the most central features of the content of narratives (2009:31). She distinguishes between three different types of actors: 1) those who more or less directly contribute to the production, reproduction or modification of the narrative in question, 2) "co-producers", i.e. the audience and 3) those who indirectly contribute to the discursive narrative in question (ibid). As for the course of events, Elliot (2005) distinguishes between two

main types: *progressive* (implying progression, performances and success) and *regressive* narratives (indicating deterioration or decline).

In order to summarize key features of narratives, Elliot identifies five common themes from research paying attention to narrative in respondent's accounts (2005:6):

1. An interest in people's lived experiences and an appreciation of the temporal nature of that experience
2. A desire to empower research participants and allow them to contribute to determining the most salient themes of an area of research
3. An interest in process and change over time
4. An interest in the self and representations of the self
5. An awareness that the researcher himself is also a narrator

These themes clearly show the social aspect of narratives. The actors themselves, as well as the researchers, with their respective perceptions and experiences of a given phenomenon, are in focus. Instead of only focusing on the event itself, narrative analysis emphasizes different *cultural interpretations* of a given phenomenon as important in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question.

Following Svarstad (2009:46), Lieblich *et al.* (1998) distinguishes between holistic and categorical approaches to narrative research. Whereas a holistic approach means that some parts of a narrative is interpreted on the basis of the narrative as a whole, a categorical approach consist in categorizing specific aspects or phenomena in one or several narratives (*ibid*). In this thesis, I have attempted to follow the suggestion of Svarstad who recommends combining these two approaches when possible (*ibid*). Indeed, individual narratives are produced in a social context which is crucial to understand, at the same time as collective stories do represent interesting unities. This topic will be given further attention in Chapter 4 and 5.

One of the primary ways – probably *the* primary way – human beings make sense of their experience is by casting it in a narrative form (Gee 1985:11)

Indeed, we produce narratives as a way of organizing knowledge and giving meaning and context to our experiences (Johansson 2005). Goodson argues that stories “are

far and away the most important feature of our everyday existence” (2013:4). Stories are indeed ubiquitous, as we spend considerable amounts of our attention on these “mental images which we call a story” (ibid:3).

In order to process and overcome challenging experiences, humans tend to organize our perceptions related to these experiences in a more or less coherent narrative. The narrative produced is not necessarily fully compatible with what really happened, but it is reflecting the actors’ chosen interpretation, rationalization and contextualization of the situation. When a difficult event or situation is placed in a contextual framework, it is easier to understand why the difficult situation appeared in the first place, and thus it may be easier to accept it. Margareta Hydén (1997:173) argues that there has been a recent growth in popularity of narrative approach in psychology where individuals achieve therapeutic help with deconstructing and reconstructing their life stories in order to end up with a story making life easier to handle and accept.

Not only is there a story of the self, but it’s been said that the self, itself, is narratively constructed (Holstein and Gubrium 2000, referred to in Svarstad 2009:44)

Holstein and Gubrium’s idea of a “narratively constructed self” draws attention to the interdependent relationship between the narrative on the one hand and the involved actors within the narrative, on the other hand. Not only is the individual influencing the story, the story is in fact also influencing the individual. Elliott applies the term “narrative identity” when referring to this phenomenon (2005:125).

Narrating in order to make sense of our experiences is not an activity limited to one or some specific cultures; it is indeed “a universal human activity” (Johansson 2005:16). The universal character of narratives underlines the importance of paying particular attention to them when exploring and striving for a deeper understanding of a social phenomenon, such as the controversial conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell.

2.1.2 Individual Narratives and the Collective Story

Inspired by Elliot (2005), Svarstad suggest a division of narratives based on the content's actors as well as the positions of the narrators (2009:43). A coarse grain division can be traced between narratives about individuals and narratives about collectives. The positions of the narrators consist of narratives in which the narrators participate in the narratives themselves, and, on the other hand, narratives investigated and constructed by researchers or other "professional" narrators who are not participating in the narrative in question (ibid). Elliot (2005:13) labels the narratives that individuals tell about themselves and their own experiences *first-order narratives* (or *individual narratives*). *Second-hand narratives* (or *the collective story*) reflect the accounts that researchers construct "to make sense of the social world and of other peoples' experiences" (ibid). Although typologies like this one is constructed in order to simplify often highly complex landscapes, and therefore consist of overlapping and contingent distinctions (Svarstad 2009:45), I do find this conceptual distinction useful to implement in this thesis. Individual experiences influence the individual's own story about himself and about the local community, whereas collective interpretations constitute frameworks for individuals' interpretations of their own lives. The collective story of my informants living adjacent to Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve will be presented based on individual narratives given by the informants.

2.2 Discursive Narratives and Presentation of Discourse Types on Conservation

I have now given a brief introduction to theoretical approaches, definitions and perceptions to narrative theory and analysis that I will apply in this thesis. In the following section, I attempt to contextualize narratives as part of a larger discourse by examining 1) discursive narratives and 2) discourse types on conservation.

2.2.1 Discursive Narratives

In order to fully grasp the meaning of *discursive narratives*, I believe it is essential to elaborate on the differences between the concepts of narratives and discourses. Svarstad *et al.* defines discourses as constituting “a manner of perceiving and presenting a particular issue that is produced and reproduced by more than one person” (2011:11). Discourses are produced by written and oral communication, containing assumptions, claims and arguments (Benaminsen and Svarstad 2010:65-6). Each discourse is characterized by one or several common topics, and they may also be communicated through certain methods of expression, such as specific metaphors. Benaminsen and Svarstad (2008:3) distinguish between “social constructions about specific cases on the one hand (narratives), and frameworks for construction of broader and more abstract phenomena on the other (discourses)”. They perceive discourses as “the wider concept implying the ontology of a social construction of a topic in a general sense” (*ibid*). The social aspect is crucial, as discourses constitute important social structures contributing to frame choices and actions of the actors in question (Benaminsen and Svarstad 2010). Michel Foucault, one of the “founding fathers” of discourse analysis in the social sciences, conducted historical studies of topics such as prisons, punishment and treatment of insanity to demonstrate how the different practices in different periods have been linked to a specific discourse dictating what is meaningful, true and accepted forms of speech and actions (Foucault 1979, 1988, after Benaminsen and Svarstad 2010:66).

A deeper understanding of the views of involved actors in a specific case requires investigation of how these views may be connected to broader ways of thinking in terms of discourses as well as ways narratives are produced in connection to the

discourses in question (Svarstad *et al.* 2011:11). Each discourse consists of two or more narratives which exemplifies the meaning and content of the discourse (Svarstad 2009:34). In other words, narratives strengthen and reconfirm the main perceptions of the discourse in question. At the same time, each of the discourses offers a framework for interpretation, which can be applied by those who want to narrate about specific cases. This phenomenon of interconnection between discourses and narratives is called *discursive narratives* (ibid). In the case of the conservation of Trillemarka, it is therefore important to present and discuss the relevant discourses framing the narratives of the local informants. By doing this, it is possible to achieve a deeper understanding of the local narratives, and hence the framework for experienced legitimacy related to the conservation process and outcome.

2.2.2 Presentation of Discourse Types on Conservation

Conservation politics differ from country to country, but scholars such as Svarstad (2009:34) argue that conservation issues often are framed in similar ways independent of national or even continental borders. Global discourses being dominated by powerful actors with global ambitions for their respective activities are indeed part of the on-going cultural globalization (ibid). Hence, global discourses may help contextualize local narratives of specific cases such as the conservation of Trillemarka. Comparing findings from narrative analysis with other narratives or discourses makes this analytical method more credible and valid. It is however important to underline that discourse types do not represent exhaustive explanatory models or frameworks when attempting to achieve a deeper understanding of conservation issues. We can perceive them as ideal types or prototypes which help us systematize and compare extensive amounts of data.

In the field of nature conservation, Svarstad *et al.* (2008) suggest four main discourse types: 1) the preservationist discourse, 2) the win-win discourse, 3) the traditionalist discourse and 4) the promethean discourse. In the following section, I will briefly present these. Narratives produced within each of the discourses, i.e. discursive narratives on conservation, will also be presented.

The Preservationist Discourse

The Preservationist discourse type (also named ‘fortress conservation’, ‘fences and fines approach’ or ‘coercive conservation’) involves valuing pristine, “untouched” nature or wilderness totally separated from human activities (Adams and Hulme 2001:10). This approach can be traced back to 18th century Western ideas about environmental management, and later the establishment of nature reserves and national parks in the United States and African colonies. The Preservationist discourse type concentrate solely on the aim of conserving biodiversity and landscapes, and ignore possible negative consequences on local population (Svarstad *et al.* 2008:119). Preservation is perceived as essential for humanity due to the intrinsic value of nature itself, as well as the beauty of wilderness. The needs and interests of local resource users are not taken into account.

The Win-Win Discourse

Since the 1980’s, new perspectives have evolved with a focus on local participation in conservation processes (Adams and Hulme 2001). From dominance of a preservationist discourse with an exclusively negative focus on the role of local population, a ‘win-win’ discourse type has gained terrain. This new focus has led to a wide number of projects and programs often labelled ‘Community-based Conservation’, where “conservation goals should be pursued by strategies that emphasise the role of local residents in decision-making about natural resources” (Adams and Hulme 2001:13). So what are the characteristics of this new discourse type? Adger *et al.* defines win-win narratives as progressive success stories where all the stakeholders end up as heroes (2011). Indeed, this discourse implies a conservation story with *benefit sharing* in which the local population takes part (Svarstad 2009:35). This benefit sharing might imply economic benefits from tourism, or, as in the case of Trillemarka, direct compensation for conserved forest and establishment of a Local Business Development Fund. The interests of the local population are presented as coinciding with the interests of the conservationists. In the win-win discourse, the local population is also supposed to engage in various forms of *participation*, although it is sometimes questionable whether this participation actually translates into real influence. A win-win discourse may consist

of a current win-win situation, although it is more common that the stories relate to how things will be in the future (Svarstad 2009:35).

When attempting to explain why the win-win discourse gained influence and attention at the expense of the preservationist discourse, several reasons have been discussed. Adams and Hulme argue that community conservation (i.e. win-win discourse) is compatible with the concept of sustainable development from the Brundtland report (1987) and the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992 (Adams and Hulme 2001:15). In the aftermath of these two events, the development objective of meeting human needs was seen as an increasingly integrated precondition for achieving conservation goals. Benjaminsen and Svarstad define this as a win-win relationship between development and the environment (2010). Another explanatory element for the ‘success’ of the win-win narrative, Adams and Hulme argue, is the focus on the needs and involvement of ‘communities’, a popular ‘buzz word’ from the late 1980’s in the West (2001:16). Also, this new focus happened at a time when top-down, technocratic approaches were seen as failing to deliver the desired social and economic results. The win-win discourse was compatible with a more participatory approach to conservation (ibid:17). Lastly, Adams and Hulme argue that the new focus on communities in conservation can be explained by the 1980’s renewed interest in the marked as delivering development (ibid). Indeed, economic incentives for all affected actors delivered through market mechanisms, were seen as essential in order to secure successful conservation processes and outcomes.

The win-win discourse is clearly the most influential way of perceiving conservation issues today, both at the international level as well as in countries such as Norway (Svarstad 2009:35). During my interviews with external actors, I recognized several aspects of the win-win discourse. The win-win discourse will therefore be central when discussing the findings from my fieldwork and narrative analysis.

The Traditionalist Discourse

The Traditionalist discourse type (also called populist discourse) typically present small farmers and land managers as victims forced by external actors to abandon their environmentally benign ‘traditional’ land use practices, and start conducting

destructive practices (Adger *et al.* 2001:687). This discourse acknowledges the existence of environmental problems, but it also builds on the assumption that local actors are capable of managing biodiversity and other natural resources in appropriate ways, if given the opportunity (Svarstad *et al.* 2008:120). Biodiversity is perceived in terms of resources and landscapes belonging to those who inhabit and depend upon the area, whereas the global dimension of environmental problems are less emphasized (*ibid*). Interventions by external actors (including global stakeholders) in environmental and resource management issues are categorically rejected, and these actors are typically portrayed as “villains” (Adger *et al.* 2001:687). Indigenous or local farmers tend to be presented as “heroes”. Traditionalist narratives can be characterized as narratives of decline, since involvement of external actors are claimed to worsen the situation for local communities.

The Promethean Discourse

The Promethean discourse type (also named *discourse of denial*) promotes a perspective in which nature and biodiversity are perceived as raw materials that can be transformed into goods (Svarstad *et al.* 2008:120). In Greek mythology, Prometheus stole fire from Zeus and thereby vastly increased the human capacity to manipulate the world for human benefit (*ibid*). Any problems (e.g. environmental damage) that might occur during this transformation, is to be solved through technical innovation. As this discourse type claims that environmental issues do not exist, there is no need for protection of nature and its biodiversity. The Promethean discourse type has been an important and dominating perspective since the Industrial Revolution and up until a few decades ago. However, as it only plays a minor role today, this perspective will not be given space in this thesis.

2.3 A Theoretical Framework on Distributional, Procedural and Sense of Justice

In order to discuss how affected forest owners experienced and perceive the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, I will apply the terms legitimacy and justice in the context of policy instruments. According to Corbera *et al.* (2007), legitimacy can be defined as a situation where all stakeholders agree that the process of design, implementation and outcomes are fair. Max Weber's concept constitutes the point of departure for most thinking on legitimacy, as explained by Frank Parkin (2002, after Svarstad *et al.* 2011:11):

Legitimations are the claims that dominant groups make about themselves – claims that they would naturally wish everyone else to accept. Legitimacy, on the other hand, refers to the condition in which such claims have in fact been accepted and endorsed by subordinate groups. That is, the grounds upon which obedience is claimed and are accepted as valid by those who are expected to do the obeying. Legitimations emanate from on high, but legitimacy is bestowed from below.

Following the interpretation of Svarstad *et al.* (2011:12), Bernstein argues that legitimacy from a sociological perspective is “rooted in a collective audience's shared belief, independent of particular observers” (2005). Moreover, he claims that “insights from the sociological perspective suggest that criteria of legitimacy ultimately are contingent on historical understandings at play and the shared norms of the particular community or communities granting authority” (ibid). In this thesis, I will, in line with Bernstein, also understand legitimacy as a fluent, historical contingent rather than a fixed and given factor.

Legitimacy also encompasses political trust, i.e. belief in the well-functioning of political institutions and other societal actors (Svarstad *et al.* 2011:12). Political trust is based on normative expectations. In the context of environmental issues, the public tend to mistrust governments, businesses, industry and sometimes experts. At the same time, people ascribe a great deal of responsibility for controlling environmental risks to these same actors (ibid).

Fairness of the process and the outcome itself can, according to Grieg-Gran *et al.* (2011), be judged on the basis of external criteria for procedural and distributive justice, but also by examining how people perceive the extent of fairness according to their own criteria. The latter is named ‘sense of justice’ by Svarstad *et al.* (2011). The notion of justice is based on normative judgments² (ibid). Furthermore, Greig-Gran *et al.* (2011:4) identifies three elements related to assessment of social impacts and legitimacy of policy instruments:

- The process of design and implementation of a policy instrument assessed against principles and standards of procedural justice;
- Impacts on wellbeing of different groups affected by the policy instrument, assessed against principles and standards of distributive justice;
- Legitimacy and sense of justice.

The first element, *procedural justice*, can be defined as a normative judgment of the fairness of the decision-making processes, encompassing access to information, consultation and representation in decision-making processes on different levels, free prior and informed consent of indigenous people as well as grievance mechanisms (Grieg-Gran *et al.* 2011:4). The second element, *distributive justice*, implies judgments of distributions among people of negative and positive outcomes, i.e. costs and benefits (Svarstad *et al.* 2011:7). These two elements can both be studied within a *critical realist approach*³, where aspects of outputs and decision-making on policy instruments for conservation are to be described and evaluated (ibid:11). In order to evaluate legitimacy in a way that is relevant from the perspective of local people and other stakeholders, Svarstad *et al.* argues that internal-based evaluation criteria are needed (ibid). Hence, the third element, *sense of justice*, encompasses the ways affected people themselves perceive and judge the intervention, i.e. information of the legitimacy of specific actions. Research on sense of justice requires a

² In moral philosophy, these judgements are divided into two main categories: deontological and consequential judgements. The former consists of judgement of the way specific actions are carried out, while the latter is concerned with end results of actions (Svarstad *et al.* 2011).

³ Shortly explained, a critical realist or naturalist approach suggests that the social world is, to a certain extent, an external reality available to be observed and described by the researcher (Elliott 2005:18).

perspective of *social constructivism*⁴, where researchers engage in describing how people affected by the changes themselves perceive and evaluate the changes. It seems plausible to expect that distributive and procedural justice affect the experienced sense of justice of many stakeholders, but this cannot be taken for granted prior to conducting research (ibid).

In order to achieve increased legitimacy of a policy instrument, one might risk increasing the costs of the process as well as reducing the efficiency of meeting a conservation goal. In the case of the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, increased participation and involvement of the affected forest owners might have led to increased administrative costs, and resulted in a less comprehensive nature reserve and hence protection of fewer biologically valuable species. At the same time, achieving increased sense of justice and legitimacy for the nature reserve would also be likely to reduce conflict levels and increase the levels of compliance. Greig-Gran *et al.* lists several key questions which can be relevant when assessing how the degree of procedural justice and distributive justice affect the legitimacy of the policy instrument in question, as well as its efficiency and effectiveness (2011:15). Some of these are: "Do fair procedures translate into fair outcomes? How will investing in procedural justice (...) to ensure adequate involvement of marginalized groups affect conservation effectiveness and efficiency?" (ibid). The perceptions of legitimacy and sense of justice will constitute a central focus in this thesis. The three elements of respectively procedural justice, distributive justice and sense of justice will all be explored as possible means for achieving increased effectiveness and efficiency of conservation.

In the initial phases of the conservation process, Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell may be defined as more or less a traditional case of "fortress conservation" (Policymix 2013a). Later on, however, substantial funds were transferred from the central government to the affected municipalities and forest owners. Thus, I ask whether there is a change in the local production of narratives that indicates a changing

⁴ A social constructivist approach implies that the social world is constantly changing, and the emphasis is therefore on understanding the production of that social world. This approach requires a greater sensitivity to the interpretive procedures through which meanings are achieved within the interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Elliott 2005:19).

“sense of justice” and legitimacy of the conservation. In the discussion of explanations of the findings, I will particularly look at the potential roles of procedural and distributional justice.

2.4 Summary

A theoretical framework for this thesis has now been outlined. The first section provided a brief presentation of theoretical approaches to narrative analysis and research. These constitute the theoretical basis for Chapter 4, where I present the results of my data collection. The second part introduced discursive narratives, as well as four discourse types in the field of biodiversity conservation. These will later function as sources of comparison for the local narrative presented in Chapter 4, and the external narrative presented in Chapter 5. Finally, I presented a theoretical framework on distributional, procedural and sense of justice. These are considered as important elements when exploring perceptions on legitimacy in the local narrative.

3. Study Area and Methodology

3.1 Study Area

Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve is situated in the three municipalities Sigdal, Rollag and Nore og Uvdal at the heart of Buskerud county in south-eastern Norway, 100 km west of Oslo (**Map 1**). It is part of a larger forest area of about 200 km² positioned between the valleys Sigdal in the east and Numedal in the west (Hofton 2011:289). This nature reserve measures about 35 kilometres from north to south. Most of the area stretches over the two municipalities Sigdal and Rollag, but the northwestern part crosses the border to the municipality Nore og Uvdal.

47 km² of what now constitutes the nature reserve, was protected under the Nature Protection Act in 2002. This area was on December 5, 2008 extended with approximately 100 km². The total area of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve is today 147.7 km². In this thesis, I will apply the name ‘Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve’ only when referring to the nature reserve established in 2008. When using the term ‘Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell’ or simply ‘Trillemarka’, I refer to both the nature reserve and the areas immediately surrounding it (i.e. the bordering parts of the three above-mentioned municipalities).

3.1.1 Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve

For a long time, the area between Sigdal and Numedal were generally unknown to non-locals, compared to the well-known neighbouring areas Blefjell in the south, Norefjell in the east and Vassfaret in the north-east. Only fishermen, hunters, cloudberry pickers, local ski enthusiasts and forest owners knew the area. The situation changed during the second half of the 1990’s when biologists noticed and examined the biological qualities in the area, and particularly after the formal start of the conservation process of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell in 1996 (Hofton 2011:291-2).

Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve represents a forest landscape characterized by a wide range of nature types. Ravines can be found at about 250 metres above sea level (m.a.s.l.), whereas mountain areas in the north are ranging up to over 1000 m.a.s.l. The highest peak is Urdefjell at Sølandsfjell in Sigdal (north-eastern part of the area) with 1080 m.a.s.l. Most of the area is positioned about 500-800 m.a.s.l. (Hofton 2011:289). In addition to ravines, forests and mountains, the area is characterized by a number of valleys, rivers, streams, lakes, bogs and steep hills. The ravines represent some of the most important parts with regards to biological values. They often consist of old-growth Norway spruce and Scots Pine with considerable amounts of deadwood, as well as humid forests with a rich diversity of lichens (Hofton 2011:294).

According to Castagneri *et al.*, the oldest known Norway spruce tree in northern Europe was recently discovered in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve and is estimated to be 529 years old (2013:232). Due to extensive human exploitation of Fennoscandian boreal forests during several centuries, old Norway spruce trees have become exceedingly rare (*ibid*). Castagneri *et al.* estimated that the maximum age of stand-forming Fennoscandian Norway spruce trees would be in the range of 500-600 years. The 529 year old tree discovered in Trillemarka is therefore among the oldest Norway spruce trees that we can have.

According to Hofton (2011:295), one of the most important explanatory factors for the rich biodiversity in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell can be found by looking at the area's geographical, topological and climatic position. The valleys between Sigdal and Numedal are indeed situated in a geographical transition zone between the lowland in the southeast towards the more mountainous north, and the area also marks a transition between a humid coastal climate and a dry inland climate (*ibid*). These types of transition zones constitute favourable conditions for biodiversity.

According to the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management (Myklebust 2007), the area of about 200 km² examined prior to the establishment of the nature reserve (hereafter referred to as 'evaluation area') housed 134 discovered red-listed species as per January 2007. 55 out of these were classified as threatened on a national scale,

and the remaining 79 species were placed in the categories “Near extinction” (NT) or “Data Deficient” (DD). The Norwegian Red List 2006 is based on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN) guidelines⁵. Various species of lichens, mosses and fungi are particularly prominent within the evaluation area (County Governor of Buskerud 2005:18). Forestry and construction of new cabins were perceived as the largest threats against the conservation values in Trillemarka (Ministry of the Environment 2008:3).

The municipality of Nore og Uvdal was only affected by the conservation in the first round of the process (2002), with 14 forest owners affected. In the second round of the process (2008), 39 forest owners in Sigdal got parts of their property conserved. This area amounted to a total of 44.5 km². In Rollag, 65 forest owners got parts of their property conserved in 2008. The total area amounted to about 54 km². In total, the second round of the conservation in 2008 affected 104 forest owners.⁶

Up until the first part of the 20th century, the practice of transhumance was an important activity in Trillemarka. At the time of the establishment of the nature reserve, none of the 57 shielings within the evaluation area were inhabited by farmers and their domestic animals during summer time. Some areas were however still used by grazing animals living at farms *outside* of the evaluation area (Ministry of the Environment 2008:3). According to the County Governor of Buskerud (2005:26), a considerable amount of timber for firewood of about 1 metre in length [*setteved*] was extracted during the 18th and 19th century for the Silver Mines at Kongsberg and Blaafarveværket at Modum (a works mining and manufacturing cobalt ore). A number of timber rafting dams were built in the neighbouring streams of Numedalslågen and Simoa (ibid). Use of natural resources has indeed been

⁵ In order for a species to be classified as either *Critically endangered* (CR), *Endangered* (EN) or *Vulnerable* (VU), it is estimated as more than 10 percent probability for the species to be extinct within 100 years’ time in the country in question (IUCN 2001).

⁶ Source: email correspondence from June 2013 with forest expert Svein Ekanger, involved in estimating economic compensations for the conserved forest in the second round of the conservation process.

historically important in this area. According to the County Governor of Buskerud (67:2005), the evaluation area of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell represented the highest concentration of user interests within one single nature reserve in Norway.

3.1.2 Sigdal, Rollag and Nore og Uvdal

The municipality of Sigdal had a total of 3538 inhabitants during the first quarter of 2013 (SSB 2013a), stretching over an area of about 840 km². Between 1996 and 2006, the population decreased with 3.2 % (Store Norske Leksikon 2007a). Forestry and agriculture are important in this municipality which houses almost 500 agricultural properties where 3.300 hectares are in use, and about 600 forest properties with a total of 46.000 hectares of productive forest (Sigdal kommune 2013a). Two thirds of the agricultural areas are used for growing grains, whereas the rest are used for grass and potatoes. In 2004, about 60.000 m³ of timber was extracted (Store Norske Leksikon 2007a). Sigdalkjøkken (a nationally-known company producing kitchen furniture) represents the largest private employer with 115 employees. Sawmills, tourism and construction of cabins are also important businesses. About 40 % of the population is employed outside of the municipality (Sigdal kommune 2013a). Sigdal is often marketed as “The Valley of Artists” [*Kunstnerdalen*] as several Norwegian painters from the 19th and 20th century found inspiration for their art in this area (e.g. Krogh, Tidemann, Gude, Skredsvig and Kittelsen).

The municipality of Rollag had a total of 1355 inhabitants during the first quarter of 2013 (SSB 2013a) and stretches over an area of 450 km². Apart from the 1970’s and 1980’s, the population has decreased since the end of the Second World War. Between 1996 and 2006, the decrease amounted to 4.9 % (Store Norske Leksikon 2007b). In 2004, the amount of extracted timber was estimated to about 30 000 m³ (ibid). For a long time, agriculture and forestry were the main important sources of income, but during the last decades there has also been some expansion of industry. Kongsberg Automotive ASA was established in 1975, and is today the largest employer in the industrial sector with about 100 employees. The company develops, manufactures and markets systems of commercial vehicle components. The

municipality houses two power stations and employs the largest number of inhabitants with a total of about 180 employees (Rollag kommune 2011).

The municipality of Nore og Uvdal had a total of 2531 inhabitants during the first quarter of 2013 (SSBa), and stretches over an area of 2505 km². The population has decreased steadily since the end of the Second World War, with a decrease of 7.7 % between 1995 and 2005 (Store Norske Leksikon 2007c). The western parts of the municipality include parts of Hardangervidda National Park. Nore og Uvdal houses four power stations, providing important income to the municipality. In 2003, the amount of extracted timber was estimated to about 35 000 m³. Numedal is named “The Valley of the Middle Age” [*Middelalderdalen*] due to the location of some of Norway’s best preserved buildings, farms and churches from the Middle Age (Nore og Uvdal kommune 2011). In Mellom-Kravik, we can also find what is probably the oldest inhabited house in Norway (Store Norske Leksikon 2007c).

According to the County Governor of Buskerud (2005:52-3), all of the three municipalities are districts with low levels of local employment and an on-going decrease in population. The municipality of Sigdal was granted status as a “transition municipality” [*omstillingskommune*] with a corresponding program for creation of value by the County Governor of Buskerud in 1999. The municipality of Rollag applied for the same status in 2002, but this application was rejected (ibid).

It was estimated that 96 properties would be affected by choosing to conserve an area of 147 km² (County Governor of Buskerud 2005:6). 43 out of these would get more than 25 % of their productive forest conserved, and 70 of them would get more than 10 % of their productive forest conserved (ibid). The same report states that forestry still constitutes an important source of income for farms combining several sources of income in Trillemarka, as forestry during wintertime for many farmers makes employment at the farm possible throughout the year (2005:30). Forestry can also function as a backup income, in case of failed yields from agriculture.

In a survey conducted by the County Governor of Buskerud (2005:31) in which 100 out of 134 potentially affected forest owners within the evaluation area responded, 75 percent answered that they were ‘strongly opposed’ to the conservation process and plans. 6 were ‘partly opposed’, 3 answered ‘neutral’, 1 answered ‘very positive’ whereas 3 did not want to reply. A large majority of the respondents claimed that

conservation of Trillemarka would force them to implement considerable operational changes for their respective farms, and almost half of them thought that conservation of the area would influence the future of the farm (ibid:45).

Based on the findings from this survey, the County Governor of Buskerud deduced that the forest owners' opposition against conservation of Trillemarka could not solely be explained through rational, economic terms; it rather had to do with "a feeling of not being listened to and considered vis-à-vis the society [*storsamfunnet*]" (ibid:46). Indeed, many forest owners disagree with the goals for forest conservation in Norway, decided upon by the Parliament. The Report by the County Governor of Buskerud also puts emphasis on the broader context of agriculture in rural areas in Norway, and concludes that many farmers perceive forest conservation as yet another constraint on their way of living (ibid). Similarly to the rest of rural Norway, farms are regularly being shut down due to lack of profits in the three municipalities, and forest conservation makes alternative ways of income such as forestry and construction of cabins impossible. Conservation adds up to a situation of insecurity for the future of agriculture and more specifically, the survival of the farms.

3.1.3 Conservation of Coniferous Forest in Norway: A Brief Historical Review 1980-2013

Protection of special nature areas is anchored in the Law on Nature Protection [*Naturvernloven*] from 1970 (Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management 1999:21). Nature reserves represent the strictest protection type in this law, and decisions on establishment of nature reserves are made by the King according to § 8:

Areas which have untouched, or close to untouched nature or constitute a special type of nature and which has particular scientific or pedagogic importance or distinguish itself by its uniqueness, can be protected as a nature reserve. An area can either be fully conserved or protected for specific purposes such as forest reserve, marsh reserve, bird reserve or alike" (ibid).

Related to the establishment of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve is the launch of the first phase of the National Conservation Plan for Coniferous Forest [*Verneplan for barskog*] in 1988. This was the result of White Paper no 68 (1980-81) where the

need for a conservation plan for coniferous, primeval forest was expressed (Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management 1999:21). Conservation plan phase I was launched by the government in 1990 with a framework for conservation of about 250 km² productive coniferous forest. This plan was to be implemented as four regional plans, where 60 % would be implemented in Eastern Norway (where Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell is located). The purpose of the conservation plan was to conserve both typical as well as rare or threatened Norwegian forest types, and securing some large conservation areas. In June 1996, the Parliament decided to accept the government's suggestion in White Paper no 40 (1994-95), aiming for an extension of the conservation plan with about 120 km², with emphasis on the high productive coniferous forest situated in the lowland and along the coast (ibid). In December 2002, 'Conservation Plan for Coniferous Forest in Eastern-Norway phase I' was launched by the government. This implied conservation of 51 areas of a total of 160 km², where 60 km² was productive coniferous forest.

The first time an area within the current Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve was mentioned within the frames of a conservation context was in a NINA report from 1991, 'Conservation Plan for Coniferous Forest. Regional Report for Eastern Norway'. The area in question was Kortefjell-Trillemarka, situated in the northern part of what is now Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve (Korsmo *et al.*. 1991:38). Although the area was estimated as having high conservation value, the County Governor of Buskerud did not recommend the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management to conserve Kortefjell-Trillemarka due to the relatively small framework for conservation at the time.

One week after the launch of the Conservation Plan for Coniferous Forest in Eastern-Norway phase II, the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management recommended the Ministry of the Environment to launch a formal conservation process with the aim of establishing a nature reserve in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell under the Law on Nature Protection. The Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management delegated the task of evaluating the possibilities and implications for conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell to the County Governor of Buskerud. This resulted in the Report by the County Governor (2005) which has already been referred to.

In September 2005, the conservation plan with four conservation alternatives were sent on local hearing. Conservation alternative 1 of 169 km² and conservation

alternative 2 of 146 km² were sketched out by the County Governor of Buskerud on request by the Ministry of the Environment. Conservation alternative 3, 99 km², was a result of a process among the affected municipalities. This alternative was based on the Norwegian Planning and Building Act, and was presented to the Minister of the Environment in October 2004. Conservation alternative 4, 198 km², was a suggestion from the Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature (hereafter abbreviated as NSCN) and Nature and Youth, based on professional recommendation from NINA and the Norwegian Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research (BioFokus).

In April 2006, the County Governor of Buskerud forwarded their recommendation of choosing conservation alternative 3 to the Norwegian Directorate of Nature Management, at the same time as specifying that a purely professional consideration would have meant conserving about 170 km². In October 2006, the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management recommended the Ministry of the Environment to conserve 147 km². This represented the County Governor's smallest conservation alternative (no 2), with an extension of two areas: the ravine Tundra as well as an extension of the existing Heimseteråsen Nature Reserve in the south-eastern part of the area (Bråthen 2009:20-3). On 8 January 2008, the government announced its decision to establish Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve of 147,7 km² (including 71,7 km² of productive forest). The formal inauguration date was 5 December 2008, when the nature reserve was formally established by Order in Council.

According to the Norwegian Directorate of Nature Management (1999), less than 1 % of Norwegian forests can be characterized as 'primeval forest' [*urskog*] (referred to by the County Governor of Buskerud 2005:8). The term 'primeval forest' is in the context of forest conservation also applied for forest which to a certain extent is influenced by humans, but where this influence is not crucial for the forest's gene material, construction or composition (ibid).

3.1.4 Norwegian Timber Industry

About 75 % of the Norwegian forest area is owned by approximately 120.000 private forest owners, many of which are organized in forestry associations (Barton *et al.* 2012:42). The Norwegian Forestry Association represents the largest one. The majority of the holdings are small and owned by non-industrial private forest owners. This means that only a handful of the forest owners actually own large areas.

According to Statistics Norway, the average income from forestry for private forest owners in Norway in 2003 was less than 8.000 NOK (Steinset and Bye 2005). For forest owners with a minimum of 50 hectares of productive forest and extraction of more than 100 m³ in 2003, the average income from forestry was 110.000 NOK. Steinset and Bye stated that ever-decreasing prices on timber as well as lack of optimism in the industry were important reasons as to why logging was down at an all-time low in 2003. Not since the mid-seventies has there been such a low level of timber extraction. In 2003, less than one third of the total increase of forest volume in Norwegian forests was logged (*ibid.*).

Norwegian forests represent an important economic resource with wider economic impacts than the timber prices may indicate. Statistics Norway estimates that about 5900 individuals were employed in forestry and services related to this industry in 2003. During the same year, about 23.000 were employed in the lumber sector. The gross value of the sale of Norwegian timber to the industry and as combustible in 2003 was about 2.2 billion NOK. For the lumber sector, the amount was estimated to about 37 billion NOK (Steinset and Bye 2005).

According to Steinset and Rundtom (2013), Norwegian private forest owners with an economic surplus from forestry in 2011, had an average yearly income from forestry of 37.000 NOK. The average gross income for the same group was 526.000 NOK in 2011, which represents an increase of 24.000 NOK from 2010. The average income from forestry was estimated to 7 % of the total average gross income. Other business income amounted to 31 %, and normal income from paid work amounted to 42 %. The rest was retirement pension as well as other types of income.

In a poll conducted among the forest owners, 60 % answered that they conduct the logging of their forest by themselves or in combination with hired help (Ministry of the Environment 2008:3). According to the County Governor of Buskerud, it is

estimated that between 10-20 % of the logging in the evaluation area is conducted through manual logging (2005:5). Most of the logging in the three municipalities is conducted by using a logging machine.

3.1.5 Construction of Cabins

During the last decades, construction of cabins has developed into an important business sector in the three municipalities. At the time of the establishment of the nature reserve, approved regulation plans for cabins inside of the evaluation area included a total of 156 cabins. Several forest owners had expressed that they wanted to build cabins within the evaluation area and some of these had presented concrete plans in order to do so, mostly in Sigdal, but also in Rollag and a few in Nore og Uvdal (Ministry of the Environment 2008:3). According to the Royal Decree, a combination of construction of cabins and forestry might have justified investment in new roads in areas which until now have been unavailable for logging. This was expected to lead to a fragmentation of the area in question (Ministry of the Environment 2008:3).

According to Statistics Norway (SSB 2013c), the total number of sales of vacation properties in Sigdal in 2012 was 109, amounting to a total price of 159.073.000 NOK. In Rollag during the same year, 43 vacation properties were sold to a total price of 59.018.000 NOK. In Nore og Uvdal, 52 vacation properties were sold to a total price of 62.120 000 NOK. In the county of Buskerud, 1112 vacation properties were sold to a total price of 1.728.288 000 NOK. An important specification for Sigdal, is that the northern part of the municipality includes Norefjell which is one of the most popular areas for skiing tourism and cabins in Norway. Although I have not succeeded in finding data for sales of vacation properties specifically on Sigdal's part of Norefjell, it seems plausible to assume that a considerable amount of the 109 vacation properties in Sigdal being sold in 2012 were located in Norefjell.

3.1.6 Location and Rationale for Choice of Study Area

The process prior to and in the aftermath of the establishment of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve spurred intense debates on a national level. The multitude of newspaper articles referred to in this thesis is illustrative in this regard. The conservation of Trillemarka is also frequently referred to in studies and media coverage on forest conservation. Both local and external informants claimed that this process represents one of the most controversial conservation processes that they knew (A#1, A#28, M#2, E#26, B#37). Although the government so far has signalled that they will prioritize Voluntary Conservation Agreements as the main instrument in future conservation processes of private forest, we do not have any guarantee that Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell will represent the very last example of a government mandated conservation process in Norway (Ministry of the Environment 2012).

Svarstad (2003) argues that it makes no sense to debate what makes a case study statistically or analytically generalizable; what is crucial is whether the case in question can have important relevance to other case studies, discourses, narratives or theories. As we will see in chapter 4 and 5, my findings from the case study of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell have resulted in several types of comparisons.

Roe (1999), referred to in Tumusiime and Svarstad (2011:242), argues that “each case should be judged on its own merits because of its complexity”. Instead of being haphazard and unstructured, “single-case study is structured in ways that parallel analytic induction” (Ragin and Amoroso 2011:133). Ragin and Amoroso also underline that there can be many different ways to frame a single case (ibid:134). In fact, cases that can be interpreted in a variety of ways should be considered as rich because “they help researchers explore the interconnection of the ideas expressed through different frames” (ibid). I hope that my research on the conservation of Trillemarka is followed by several other interpretations with different analytical frameworks enabling an even deeper and richer insight into the case.

3.2 Research Strategy

In order to investigate how local people tend to tell about the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, I have chosen to conduct a qualitative study based on narrative research. Following Holstein and Gubrium (2000), Saldaña underlines that stories operate *within* society as much as they are about society (referred to in Saldaña 2009:144). While conducting narrative research, it is therefore important to pay attention not only to the psychological but also the sociological contexts of stories. Environments such as close relationships, local culture, jobs, and organizations do influence the individual's telling of personal stories. They constitute important characteristics of the reality that the narratives in question claim to say something about. As briefly introduced in section 2.3, it is common to distinguish between *realist* and *social constructivist* approaches to narrative research. The emphasis on both social context and the researcher's own impact on the research, are essential elements in a social constructivist approach. One may, according to Svarstad (2009:49) distinguish between two main positions within social constructivism. The first one, ontological relativism, challenges the idea that there exist a true "reality", arguing that the reality is determined by the observer. The second one, epistemological relativism, implies that one can never precisely know what reality really exist of, although proponents of this perspective acknowledge the existence of material and other aspects which exist independently of human thinking (ibid). Following ontological relativism, my only focus in this study would have been the narratives themselves. From the position of epistemological relativism, one acknowledges the importance of also examining the social context that the narratives are part of, and the interlinked relationship between the two of them. Indeed, narratives are affected by the social reality that they are part of, and vice versa.

A deductive orientation implies that "the research design and the collection of data are guided by specific research questions that derive from theoretical concerns" (Bryman 2008:54). Narrative research is, on the other hand, primarily inductive. This implies that the researcher gathers empirical data without having too many assumptions or theories on beforehand. Striving towards an open-minded attitude and trying to forget about one's assumptions and prejudices, is the ideal (ibid). In May 2012, before I got the chance to explore any of the existing research or literature on

the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, my supervisor and I visited the area for a preliminary fieldtrip as part of securing an inductive approach. Throwing me out in the field triggered a more open attitude towards what was ahead of me. I experienced this method as both a bit frightening, but also very rewarding. I also got the impression that our informants felt more at ease when we explained that we had barely done any research on the conservation process ahead of the trip. This might also have helped us achieving more precise and detailed stories, as our informants might have looked at us as “amateurs” in a field that they knew a lot more about.

Another inductive aspect of my research was that my three main research questions were reformulated both during and after my fieldwork. Ahead of the preliminary fieldtrip, I did however have some ideas about the topics that I was interesting in knowing more about, such as local perceptions on economic instruments and the conservation process in general (both now and ahead of the establishment of the nature reserve) as well as perceptions on voluntary conservation agreements (VCA) compared to government mandated conservation. Naturally, this did affect my findings. Furthermore, some of the preliminary data analysis (notes and discussions) also happened during the data collection. This aspect made some of the research both inductive and deductive. This interactive process of collecting and gathering data and formulating theories in parallel is some of the main characteristics of grounded theory, as described by Bryman (2008:694). Grounded theory implies mainly an inductive research strategy, which has also been the case for my thesis.

3.3 Research Design

According to Bryman, the term research design refers to a framework for the collection and analysis of data, reflecting “decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process, such as causality and generalization” (2008:698). When choosing research design, there is a multitude of options to consider. These include comparative, cross-sectional, longitudinal, experimental and case study design (ibid:30). I will in this section shortly explain why I found case

study as the most appropriate research design when examining the conservation of Trillemarka.

As the name indicates, the basic case study consists of a detailed and intensive analysis of a single case, investigated due to the interest in its own rights (Bryman 2008:52-3). Indeed, an important feature of case studies is the researcher's ideographic approach, where one is interested in elucidating the unique characteristics of one single case (ibid:54). A case can consist of different types of groups, such as a community, a school, a family or an organization (2008:52).

A major criticism on case studies is concerned with external validity or generalizability (Bryman 2008:55). It does seem appropriate to question whether the findings of one single case can prove representative for other cases or phenomena. The intention of applying Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell as a case study was however not to claim its representativeness for other cases. It was rather chosen as an object of interest in its own right. Following Yin (1989:47), there are many reasons to concentrate on one single case. Firstly, the case might represent a critical case in testing a well-formulated theory, i.e. implying a deductive method. Secondly, the case might represent something extreme or unique. Thirdly, the case might be revelatory, i.e. the researcher has access to a situation previously inaccessible to scientific observation.

I would argue that the case of Trillemarka represents an ideal research opportunity for a case study. Firstly, the establishment of the nature reserve is both extreme and unique in several ways. It is so far the last example of a government mandated forest conservation process in Norway. It can be characterized as extreme in the sense that it spurred an intense, polarized national debate due to massive engagement from both sympathizers for the local population and the conservationists. The debate also included several instances of threats and verbal aggression directed against involved biologists and conservationists (Drammens Tidende 08.09.09). It is unique in the sense that the process prior to the establishment of the nature reserve included direct involvement from the current Ministers, something which is highly rare for conventional conservation processes. It is also unique by representing Norway's largest forest reserve (as per July 2013).

Secondly, the conservation of Trillemarka is interesting because it illustrates some important aspects of the discourses applied in conservation debates in Norway. Finally, the case of Trillemarka was chosen because it constitutes part of POLICYMIX' multiple studies on effects of economic instruments in provision for ecosystem services. Although the focus of this thesis is on Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell as a single case, it is at the same time part of a larger scientific framework.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

My study is primarily based on primary sources, i.e. semi-structured, in-depth narrative interviews with representatives from the main actor groups involved in the conservation process. I did however also apply secondary sources, such as archival material, for valuable background information. Additionally, I took field notes in order to keep track of and process information, ideas, observations and experiences. This was also helpful while analysing my findings.

I conducted my fieldwork in the three municipalities between May and October 2012. During these months, I visited Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell three times, conducting in total 24 interviews. The rest of my interviews were conducted in Oslo (5) and on phone (4). In total, I interviewed thirty-five individuals, through thirty-three interviews.

Data collection in a case study implies the use of multiple sources of evidence in order to secure triangulation. Following Bryman, triangulation refers to “the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings may be cross-checked” (2008:700). Triangulation is a technique applied in order to minimize the risk of the researcher having misunderstood what he or she has seen, and rather obtain greater confidence in findings, i.e. credibility and trustworthiness (ibid:377-9). Another important aspect with narrative research is to convince the readers that the researcher has confronted and discussed the question of whether the accounts produced in a qualitative interview study are accurate or valid representations of reality (Elliott 2005:22 and Bryman 2008). Indeed, we cannot naively believe in the narratives presented without questioning the credibility of

these narratives by examining facts and using several methods and sources of data. After having presented the narrative found among my local informants living adjacent to Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, I will adopt a critical realist perspective and explore possible reasons as to why the local people presented a Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment. Throughout this process, I have applied a number of different sources such as interviews with government officials and national-level forest bureaucrats as well as archival materials.

3.4.1 Documents

Documentary sources in qualitative research include a wide range of different types, such as personal documents (both written and visual), official documents, mass-media output and Internet resources (Bryman 2008:515). During my study, I have used formal reports, articles, media output (both written newspaper articles and some archived television clips), information and opinions on homepages of relevant organizations, governmental notices, management plans and proposals, in addition to relevant literature on the topic. One of the obvious advantages of applying documents that have not been produced specifically for the purpose of social research is that they are non-reactive, i.e. the possibility of a reactive effect⁷ can be largely discounted (ibid). Following Scott (1990), referred to in Bryman (2008:516), there are no reason to assume that written sources necessarily are more reliable than other types of sources. Documents can prove to be both inaccurate and biased. Scott lists four criteria for assessing the quality of documents: 1) Authenticity, 2) Credibility, 3) Representativeness and 4) Meaning (ibid). It is crucial to pay close attention and maintain “the critical glasses”, although formal documents might appear of high quality at the very first glance. Questioning the reliability of documents leading to the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell was a recurrent issue in many of the local and external accounts. Documents are, in any case, important as part of the process of data triangulation, and they provide important information on background, dates, spelling and specific details which are easily ignored or forgotten during interviews. It was interesting to keep the various

⁷ Reactive effect or reactivity refers to the response of research participants to the fact that they know they are being studied (Bryman 2008:698). Reactivity is deemed to result in untypical behaviour.

narratives in mind while reading official documents and media articles, and paying particular attention to the occurrence of controversial concepts such as ‘untouched nature’, ‘wilderness’ and ‘primeval forest’. I found it relatively easy to access the documents that I needed in order to analyse my findings, and I often followed advices from my informants about documents and literature to look for. Throughout this whole process, I was particularly inspired by the two following master theses with narrative approaches on case studies related to nature management: Bråthen (2009) and Lerkelund (2011).

3.4.2 Interview and Sampling Procedure

Semi-structured in-depth narrative interviews of actors involved in the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell has been the main focus of my data collection. According to Bryson, the aim of narrative interviews is to “elicit interviewees’ reconstructed accounts of connections between events and between events and contexts” (2008:559). The focus is on stories that people employ to account for events. The interviewer is part of the interview process in that he or she is fully implicated in the construction of the story for the interviewee. Ragin and Amoroso defines in-depth interviewing as

(...) a type of qualitative research that emphasizes the building of relationships and exploration of ideas with the individuals being studied. A researcher conducts detailed interviews to gain a better understanding of the behaviours, values, and opinions of the people studied, and of the ways they make sense of their lives, work and relationships (2011:227).

Proponents argue that a narrative approach is the only one taking into account that social life requires acknowledging that people perceive their lives in terms of continuity and process (Bryman 2008:557). People have a tendency to strive towards coherent stories on events or topics in question when given enough time and attention. When letting people speak more or less freely, and apply their own words and expressions, the researcher is more likely to achieve richer and more detailed stories compared with more structured interviews. During my fieldwork, I easily felt sympathy with my informants’ various perspectives due to their generous sharing of

life events, personal opinions and world-views. Personal one-to-one encounters with a generous time frame are a good starting point for building trust.

Implementation of Narrative Interviews in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell

The purpose of choosing narrative interviews was to achieve insight into how various individuals told about their situation, the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell as well as the economic instruments implemented. All of my interviews were conducted based on the following main questions: 1) What are your perceptions on/Please tell me about the process and establishment of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve? 2) How do you perceive the situation today? and 3) What are your thoughts on the compensations and the Local Business Development Fund in relation to legitimacy of the nature reserve? I did ask additional questions, as well as follow-up questions if needed, but these three represent the main topics of the interviews. They functioned as a short interview guide which helped me keeping my focus throughout the fieldwork. Ahead of all of the interviews, I also formulated some extra questions specifically based on the background and role of the interviewee. For some informants, it was enough to ask the first broad question and the informant would start a long monologue where he or she touched upon many of the questions on my list.

During walking interviews with three of my informants, some parts of the recorded interviews were impossible to transcribe due to too much noise on the tape (wind). Spending a total of four days together with one of my informants created a relaxed atmosphere and mutual confidence. An important part of these four days was trivial chatting or even silence as we were walking in the landscape.

Particularly through the method of walking interviews, I have deepened my understanding for both sides of the conflict. A forest owner proudly showed me a prepared path leading to a catholic statue of Madonna just outside the nature reserve that he himself had contributed by putting up. He could tell that even a group of nuns from the Catholic Church of Kongsberg had hiked up to the statue, albeit their shoes being more suitable for city-use than a forest path. This illustrates the accessibility of the statue. Another day during my fieldwork, I hiked up to an area just below Vardefjell in the north-eastern part of the nature reserve together with one of the

representatives from NSCN. This area is supposed to be one of the areas with small clusters of forest that to a certain extent may be classified as ‘primeval forest’, with most of the coniferous trees being more than 400 years old.

The three informants with whom I went for walking interviews, also turned out to be some of my main key informants. It was their respective suggestions to conduct the interview while hiking and exploring parts of the nature reserve. Four of the other informants mentioned, during indoor-interviews, that it actually felt a bit ‘wrong’ to be indoor while talking about the conservation, since our topic was actually ‘out there, in the woods’ (E#20, E#21, F#10, F#16). Due to time constraints, I only conducted ‘walking interviews’ with the three above-mentioned informants.

In her thesis on various perspectives on landscapes and land use in Argyll in Scotland, Karen L. Syse spent a considerable amount of time walking with her informants in the landscape (2009:19-20). She notes that

When moving about outside, certain elements were left out or ignored while others were considered important and worthy of comment (...) Observing the informants outdoors, helped convey what it was about the land that they valued. These valuations were sometimes difficult for them to express at a desk or kitchen table, and needed to be explored alongside the informants, as it is through our body that we physically experience our environment (ibid).

Sharing the experience of walking together in parts of Trillemarka encouraged a fluid conversation. My interest in the history of the area, different types of landscapes as well as vulnerable species, also contributed to a favourable interview setting. Walking interviews also meant a nice break from long in-door interviews.

Given that Nore og Uvdal was the municipality the least affected, I chose to limit my fieldwork to interviews with politicians and administrative staff in this municipality. When conducting interviews in both Sigdal and Rollag, I visited both the city hall and affected forest owners in their respective homes.

Selection of Informants

In total, I have been conducting thirty-three in-depths interviews, lasting between 45 min to 10 hours (walking interviews over four days). The average time for an

interview was about 1.5 hours. Twice, I interviewed two interviewees together. Four of the interviews were conducted through phone. Among a total of thirty-five informants, fourteen were forest owners, among whom three were or had recently been involved in a process of Voluntary Conservation Agreement. Nine informants held administrative positions (one from the county level, six from the three municipalities, one from the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management and one from the Ministry of the Environment). Three of the informants were representatives from NSCN, one was active in Nature and Youth during the conservation process and two were biologists having conducted biological registrations in the area on behalf of NINA and BioFokus. Six politicians were interviewed, including five previous or current mayors and Erik Solheim. I did not ask the informants to tell me their age, as I did not consider this as any important information. But I assume that the youngest informant was in his early thirties, and the oldest one might have been in his seventies. The majority of my informants were about 40 to 50 years old. Thirteen out of my thirty-five informants were women. I had to ask specifically for suggestions of potential female informants among the forest owners, and I managed to get the hold of four out of a total of thirteen forest owners. I got the impression that it was mainly male forest owners being involved in the public debate on the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell.

Table 1: Overview of informants

| Informant groups | Total number |
|--|---------------------|
| Forest owners | 14 |
| Local administrative staff | 6 |
| Regional and national administrative staff | 3 |
| Former and current mayors in the affected municipalities | 5 |
| Representatives from involved conservation organizations | 4 |
| Involved biologists | 2 |
| Former Minister of International Development and the Environment | 1 |
| <i>Total number of informants</i> | 35 |

The reason why I decided to mainly focus on the accounts my local informants was that they were the ones being directly affected, and their views also seemed to be less prevalent in the media and in the public debate in general. With a background from environmental activism, I was also more curious to learn about the views and backgrounds of ‘the other side’. Additionally, I found the local informants to present the most complex and challenging views to understand.

Sampling Procedure

For my study, I chose a sampling method named “snowball sampling”, described by Bryman (2008:699) as a non-probability sample in which “the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contact with others”. Initially, I contacted some of the individuals being active in the media during the process, as well as mayors and relevant administrative staff and asked them for further referrals for people that they considered as relevant for my research topic. This turned out to be an efficient strategy, as everyone I talked to be willing and often eager to provide me with new names. Evidently, this method does not claim to present a statistically representative sample as it is based on social contacts. I rather aimed at getting in touch with

individuals with different perspectives on the conservation, and this depended on my contacts' social networks and preferences. After the preliminary fieldtrip in May 2012 and a number of phone calls, I found myself with a list of about thirty potential interviewees. Towards the end of my fieldwork, I eventually felt that I had reached a point of 'saturation of knowledge', where I believed that talking to even more people would not make me encounter any significantly different ways of telling about the conservation than the ones I had already experienced (Ragin and Amoroso 2011:231). Both conservationists and local informants kept presenting the same main ways of telling about the conservation.

Self-reflexivity in Data Collection

According to Elliot (2005:4), there has during the last decades been a growing awareness of the interviewer's role in constructing the stories from interviewees. During my fieldwork in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, I did spend a lot of time reflecting on my own role in the interviewing situation, how my informants perceived me and how this influenced the narratives being presented to me. My identity as a young woman, student, researcher, urban dweller, outdoorsy and with an interest in nature and cultural history was often partly a contrast with my typical informant: a middle-aged man, owning a farm and/or forest, interested in agriculture and traditional use of nature. Some of my local informants associated NINA with the conservation proponents, and I was therefore afraid that this would affect the narratives presented to me. However, I did have the impression that my informants spoke quite freely. Although the interviewer's role and self-reflexivity do create some bias for the construction of stories, awareness of one's own identity might also be an advantage. I pictured that a young woman like me with a friendly attitude and interest in my informants' life histories and perceptions on their own area, might have appear less frightening than someone with another identity. I also tried to avoid using difficult terms and expressions, particularly when presenting the research project.

Specification of 'local people'

As the term 'local people' or 'local population' has already been applied several times in this thesis, I will in this section shortly specify what I mean by this term.

‘Local people’ may in some contexts appear ambiguous, as it may not always be clear of whom this group consists, as well as its characteristics. I recognize that local people affected by the establishment of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve do not represent any homogenous group, but rather a multitude of people with differing interests, characteristics, opinions, interpretations and agendas. During my fieldwork, I therefore aimed at reflecting this diversity by interviewing informants with different perspectives, backgrounds and levels of involvement in the conservation process. Also, I would like to underline that when referring to ‘local people’, I do not claim that my study equally represents all the people affected by the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, nor all the people living close to it.

3.5 Data Analyses and Transcription

I have been altering between data collection, transcription, coding and reading on methodology, theory and the topic in question. I believe that this has enabled me to achieve a better understanding of my research topic. I carefully listened to all of my thirty-two recorded interviews, and read through my transcripts several times in order to become familiar with the accounts. This also facilitated the selection of important information, and furthermore the organization and analysis of my empirical data. In addition to manual coding, I also used the code-and-retrieve data analysis program NVivo 9 in order to more easily manage and find patterns in my data material. The “search” function in Word was also very helpful in quickly regrouping words or sentences. Transcribing the interviews turned out to be a highly time-consuming activity, resulting in a document of 433 pages. During the coding phase, it was important for me not to lose sight of neither my research questions, nor the coherence or the narrative flow of the accounts. With this in mind, I therefore tried to make sure that the extracts of the interviews that I found to be relevant for one or several of my thirteen coding categories, were large enough to present a certain context and narrative flow for the opinion in question. This secured that more of the context was preserved. I also regularly discussed my material with colleagues and friends throughout the process, something I found very useful in order to keep up the motivation and get new ideas and perspectives on my material.

3.5.1 The Process of Transcription and Coding

There are, according to Elliott, mainly two ways of transcribing in-depth interviews while aiming to “preserve some of the additional meaning that was conveyed by the speaker’s use of intonation, pauses, rhythms, hesitation and body language” (2005:51-3). She distinguishes between *clean* versus more *detailed* transcripts, where not only the content but also the way that a narrative is recounted is salient (ibid). In detailed transcripts, which are often used by conversation analysts, non-verbal and non-lexical remarks are to a certain degree included. Non-lexical remarks may include pauses, intonation, false starts, repetitions etc. Clean transcripts, on the other hand, mainly focus on the content of what is said. This strategy provides a text or excerpts which are easier to read, but lacks details on how the content was communicated. During my process of transcription, I quickly adopted an approach close to clean transcripts, although I did try to include non-verbal or non-lexical utterances where I found this to be of particular importance to the conveying of meaning. A method of clean transcripts is considerably more time-efficient than more detailed transcripts, and I was also afraid of losing focus on the research question if I were to focus too much on the way the narratives were recounted.

Coding takes place as a transitional process between data collection and more extensive data analysis. As highlighted by Saldaña (2009:4), coding is primarily an interpretive act, rather than a precise science. Elliott (2005:51) states that any transcription of speech will necessarily represent a compromise. The ideal is to strive towards the best conveying of meaning as possible. During my fieldwork in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, I had the advantage of speaking the same language as my interviewees, although most of them did speak a different dialect than me. This did however not affect my understanding of their accounts in any important manner. All of the quotes from my interviews are translated into English by the signatory. This extra step of interpretation has probably created some bias, although I did strive to provide as precise translations as possible. Some of the local expressions and words are kept in Norwegian where I found it difficult to convey the nuances into English.

When referring to quotes from my interviews, the interviewer (me), will be referred to with the letter *I*. The interviewees will be referred to with a capital letter referring to the group that they belong to, as well as a number (1-35). F#[no] = Forest owner, A#[no] = Administrative staff, E#[no] = Environmentalist (i.e. representative from

one of the involved conservation organizations) and M#[no] = Former or current mayor in one of the affected municipalities.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Prior to my fieldwork, my study project was approved by the Centre for Development and the Environment. Additionally, it was approved by my external supervisor Hanne Svarstad on behalf of NINA. The study project also got approval from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services after having accounted for how to manage sensitive information.

During the preliminary field trip, my supervisor and I were warned by one of the local administrative staff that we had to be careful when talking with the local informants, because things had just started to calm down, and “no one wanted any ‘ripping up’ of the conflict”. A few times during my interviews with forest owners, I had to avoid certain questions concerning the process prior to the establishment of the nature reserve due to the interviewees’ emotional reactions such as quivering, anger and sadness. Although a different approach might have led to even more interesting results for the study, I had to remain very careful and respectful towards my interviewees. These emotional reactions also illustrate that the conservation process represented a tough period for the actors involved.

3.6.1 Informed Consent

Another important element in social research ethics is the principle of informed consent. Ragin and Amoroso define the concept of informed consent as

(...) the process that a researcher follows to ensure that all participants or their legally authorized representatives are entering into a research study voluntarily, fully informed and with the ability to withdraw at any time (2011:227).

To all of my interviewees, I distributed a letter with a short introduction of the research project, as well as a brief description on how I was going to conserve sensitive information. These letters were signed, and the interviewees kept a copy of the document. Prior to the interviews, the informants had to agree that I recorded the interviews. All of my interviewees agreed, except for one due to health issues. In the letter (Appendix A), it also says that all the records from the fieldwork will be deleted after the end of POLICYMIX. I always started the interviews by a brief oral introduction of the research project, my background and more generally on the content of the above-mentioned form. I did not provide any payment to my interviewees, although they did spend considerable amounts of their valuable time with me. This was both due to economic constraints, but also in order to secure an unbiased sampling procedure.

3.6.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality

The concept of anonymity implies ensuring that names and identities of the informants are hidden, which means that the informants remain nameless when publishing the final research product. Confidentiality “aims to conceal the true identity of the participants” (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005:225). This implies that the researcher may have to remove identity descriptions and names from the interview records, ensuring that field notes, records and transcripts are stored in a safe place and making sure that the material is used exclusively for the purpose of the study (Bryman 2008:118-9). Given that my study reveals some sensitive information, I decided to preserve the anonymity of all of my informants, except for Erik Solheim, who agreed to have his identity revealed during the interviews due to his previous position of representing the government. When transcribing, I codified all the names of my informants, and kept the explanation for the codes in a separate document. Throughout the thesis, I strived to avoid referring to the names of the affected municipalities. The three municipalities are indeed relatively small, and the total number of inhabitants only amounts to about 7500. In order to hide the informant’s gender, I refer to all of my informants as males. I also tried to avoid referring to characteristics such as employment situation and personal background for my informants. Despite these efforts, I cannot guarantee that individuals who are particularly familiar with both the conservation process and the actors involved, will

be unable to identify any of the informants. Although the case spurred intense debate, it was only a limited number of individuals being heavily involved in the process. For some of the most well-known and involved actors, I specifically asked for approval of how I wanted to refer to them. I also got approval from my informants for all the direct quotes applied in the thesis, as well as sentences and sections where I have referred to specific informants through the use of their respective code. This rather time-consuming task served as a respondent validation for my presentation and interpretation of my data.

3.7 Challenges and Limitations of Narrative Research

There are several challenges and constraints associated with narrative research. A common critique of narrative research from a positivist point of view is that it is too “subjective”, i.e. not scientific enough. Some scholars argue that narrative researchers tend to treat the stories they are told uncritically, and neglect for instance motives and social conditions prompting the particular narratives being produced (Bryman 2008:560). I will in this section content myself with arguing that an essential feature of narrative research is the participatory and self-reflexive role of the interviewer in the creation of narratives.

Another challenge with narrative research is that it is rather time-consuming, and a number of in-depth interviews may result in an overwhelming amount of data material. Despite the workload, this method provided me with a deeper insight than I think would have been possible through a quantitative method. Narratives often imply partly contradicting elements making them confusing to deal with. This illustrates that human beings are never fully consistent or rational in our behaviour and reasoning.

According to Benjaminsen and Svarstad (2010:77), producers of win-win narratives often tend to know the case in question well, are personally involved and have self-interest in a positive representation. It is therefore crucial to remain critical even to what appear as convincing descriptions of harmonic cooperation and fair distribution of benefits. The risk of bias associated with people's responses for strategic reasons

have also been emphasized by Greig-Gran *et al.* (2011:13-4) and Svarstad (2009:42). According to Tumusiime and Svarstad (2011:256), each narrative “constitutes a way of telling about a situation that producers and reproducers are likely to think is to their own advantage”. The narratives may indeed serve as legitimizing the narrative producers’ own practices. In the conservation case of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, several of the local informants associated NINA with proponents of conservation, and it is therefore plausible to assume that the narratives presented to us were influenced by this association. The local informants might have had an interest in underestimating the efficiency of the economic benefits implemented, and the conservationists might have had an interest in overemphasizing them. This will be further discussed in section 4.1.1 and 5.4.1.

3.8 Summary

I have in this section presented the methodology applied, as well as relevant information on the study area. Narrative research has been presented as the main research strategy, and case study has been presented as the chosen research design. Moreover, I have briefly outlined methods of data collection, transcription, coding and analysis. Ethical considerations and challenges related to narrative research have also been discussed. Presentation of the methodology applied constitutes an important basis for the following chapter, which entails presentation and discussion of findings from the narrative interviews.

4. Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment: Presentation and Findings from Narrative Analysis

This chapter is divided into three parts. First, I will answer my first research question by presenting what I have identified as a Local Narrative of Marginalization. This narrative is about how my local informants narrated their experience of the conservation process. Then, I will examine what I found to be a Local Narrative of Pragmatic Adjustment identified among the same informants. This narrative encapsulates some of their thoughts on how they perceive the situation today. Finally, I will introduce the narrative *form* by examining the plot of both of the two interlinked narratives, as well as the different actors involved. The Local Narrative of Marginalization and the Local Narrative of Pragmatic Adjustment are produced by the same actors; depending on the topic and the questions they are being asked. The former was produced when I brought up the conservation process and aspects related to the past. The latter was presented when I asked how my local informants perceived their situation today (2012), and how they looked at the future. The two narratives are therefore closely interlinked and complementary, and they will in chapter 5 and 6 be referred to as the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment for the sake of clarity.

In this chapter, I will also discuss my second research question, i.e. whether local narrative production reflect an enhanced legitimacy due to economic benefits that were brought in on late stages, and why or why not this is so. Although I deliberately made an effort to obtain different and contrasting perspectives, some clear similarities between the individual narratives that were told can be distinguished. I will therefore argue that the collective story presented in this chapter represent a common story that is representative for the majority of my local informants. Elements from the individual narratives which deviate from this story will also be presented.

4.1 A Local Narrative of Marginalization

4.1.1 Main Foci

The Local Narrative of Marginalization contains five main foci that appear repeatedly in the accounts of my local informants: The first describes how local people feel excluded and marginalized from the conservation process. The two next foci describe how respectively traditional culture and traditional economic activities are perceived as being threatened by the conservation. The forth describes how conservation is seen as a symbol of the urban, environmentalist elite's increasing power at the expense of prosperity in rural areas. The fifth consist of my local informants' discontent with both the size and the form of the economic compensations.

Feeling of Marginalization

A sense of marginalization appears as both an explicit and as a more implicit reference in the local accounts. New Oxford American Dictionary defines the verb 'to marginalize' as "treating (a person, group, or concept) as insignificant or peripheral". Indeed, a feeling of marginalization implies a lack of sense of justice. The accounts of my local informants illustrate that they felt marginalized in relation to both the conservation process itself, but also with regards to the outcome. The municipalities' conservation alternative, heavily supported by the local population, was indeed rejected by the government. Several of the forest owners expressed disappointment with the high level of hostility between them and the conservationists as a partial result of the conservation process of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell. One of them complained that

(...) we were so close to create a really good and important alliance between the Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature and the other local conservation forces (F#16).

A recurrent theme in the local accounts was that the main problem with the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, was the process itself. Although all of the

local informants showed disappointment with the governments' rejection of the municipalities' conservation alternative, the most important and recurrent element of complaint was the conservation process in itself. One of the local administrative staff put it this way:

It was all about the government's wish that was forced on the local communities [tres nedover] (...) A bit of traditional "overruling" [overkjøring] (A#11).

- *Local, traditional, experience-based knowledge poorly valued in the process*

A large majority of my local informants claimed that one of the main reasons why they felt marginalized in the conservation process could be ascribed to what they tended to call a lack of trust in local, traditional, experienced-based knowledge. One of the former mayors in one of the municipalities claimed that many found the conservation process particularly difficult because they had to "fight extra hard" in order to prove that their local knowledge was actually valid knowledge (M#14). In the local accounts, this type of knowledge based on traditions and experience was defined as different from research-based or scientific knowledge by being more holistic (not narrowly focused on a tiny area of a field), including humans in the calculation and deriving from practice of many people over a long period of time. This distinction will be further discussed in section 5.4.

Closely linked with the claim of marginalization of experience-based knowledge is my local informants' focus on Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell as an area which has been extensively used throughout several decades through logging, transhumance and, since the 1980's: construction of cabins. A recurrent claim in the local accounts was that biodiversity depends on sustainable use, and not "cheese dome conservation" [osteklokkevern] (M#2, M#14, M#13, M#15, F#16, F#34). None of my local informants disagreed that conservation of biodiversity is important, but as a mayor in one of the municipalities put it: "Yes, of course biodiversity is important. But it doesn't necessarily have to be conserved as a nature reserve!" (M#2).

Conservationists have, particularly through the media, claimed that some parts of the area could be characterized as untouched or pristine [urørt] (e.g. Aftenposten 22.12.02), or even as primeval forest [urskog] (e.g. Nationen 23.03.07). All of my

informants from environmental organizations as well as the two interviewed biologists all claimed to consciously having avoided the terms “untouched” and “primeval forest” when describing the area as a whole. This does however not include a few limited spots within the nature reserve such as a few areas below Vardefjell in Sigdal, where many of the trees are 400-500 years old (Hofton 2011:295). While skimming through hundreds of articles from national and local newspapers related to the conservation process, it appears that the terms ‘untouched’ [urørt] and ‘primeval forest’ [urskog] has been important parts of conservationists’ argumentation. Themes related to local, traditional knowledge, on the other hand, are almost exclusively present in local and some agricultural-friendly national newspapers such as *Nationen*. Many of my local informants claimed that one of the most upsetting elements of the whole conservation process was the area being described as “pristine” and “untouched”. The practice of transhumance and logging was essential for the livelihood of some of the parents and for most of the grandparents of my local informants. I was told that the stories and pictures being transferred from one generation to the next mainly were based on traditional use of the area (F#4). When Trillemarka was described as untouched with primeval forest, this appeared as highly provocative to all of my local informants. A majority of them also reacted emotionally when this topic was brought up.

- *Environmentalism leading on discursive and political power*

Most of the interviewed forest owners claimed that the involved conservationists were more professional at handling and communicating through the media, compared with the forest owners (e.g. F#17). Media is crucial in influencing public opinion, and thereby the politicians depending on popularity and on votes for their re-election. Several of the forest owners were particularly concerned with the impact of the media on public opinion during the conservation process:

(...) the media is crucial in forming our interpretations of happenings around the world. Our strong opinions about things are often based on one-sided representations in the media. No wonder that conflicts arises (...)! (F#16)

A representative from one of the involved conservation organizations admitted that conservationists depend on “noise” [*bråk*] in order for their opinions to win through. “As long as we [*conservationists*] don’t engage in new conflicts (...) It becomes quiet. And then we don’t get to conserve anything” (E#22). This informant claimed that most conservation processes in Norway are a result of initiatives from local conservationists and “outdoorsy individuals”. Politicians are very rarely the ones who initiate conservation processes, he claimed. A recurrent theme in the local accounts was the claim that environmentalist organizations lived off or were dependent on conflict or “noise”, in order to recruit new members, secure their income and “win” their cases (e.g. A#9 and F#4).

One of the forest owners described the involved conservationists as “a conservation troll” [*vernetroll*], representing a minority in the Norwegian population, who devoured [*gape*] more and more and never got satisfied” (F#32). On the other hand, my informants from involved conservationist organizations, tended to portray the forest owners as greedy, traditionalist and egoistic with a narrow focus on resource extraction and economic profit from logging and cabin industry (i.e. E#21). It was interesting to listen to both sides of the conflict describing each other with some of the same rhetoric.

Some aspects in the accounts of representatives from the involved conservation organizations, made me think of forest conservation as a form of missionary. In one of the accounts, the conservation process is described as involving a need to “convert them [the forest owners] to voluntarily accept Voluntary Conservation Agreements in an area”, the forest owners “only need some time in order to turn around [*snu om*]”, to avoid the forest owners “being difficult [*sette seg på bakbena*] ” (E#26). One of the biologists claimed that once the knowledge level of the forest owners increased, they would look differently at the forest (B#37). I could sense an underlying tone of superiority towards the forest owners in several of the accounts among these informants. This is consistent with the views of a majority of the local accounts.

Several of the forest owners had a hard time distinguishing between the different roles of respectively environmental organizations, the County Governor, independent research institutions, the Norwegian Directorate of Nature Management, the Ministry

of the Environment and the government. This is an illustrative quote from one of the affected forest owners:

So (...) the differences between NINA and the Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature and everyone who was doing the conservation, it all became [like] a porridge at the end. (...) I think that many of us are left with that perception that they are all one unit (F#12).

These reflections are understandable, as the conservation process involved a multitude of institutions with different roles. It is however problematic in terms of legitimacy for conservation processes when “the conservationists” [*vernerne*] is perceived as “one unit”. Environmental organizations are NGOs without any public accountability restricting their actions (apart from their own members through bylaws decided upon at annual meetings). They are not obliged to take into account considerations related to for instance local culture, business or politics. The County Governor has a broader responsibility with focus on social, economic, administrative and environmental concerns related to conservation processes within the county. Independent research institutions such as NINA and BioFokus, and their respective employees, are confined with strictly professional practices and advices with regards to conservation processes. It is therefore highly problematic if for instance biologists conducting biological registrations in a potential conservation area are being perceived as having private political agendas which correspond with the conservationists. The Norwegian Directorate of Nature Management’s role is to give professional advices to the Ministry of the Environment. The Ministry of the Environment is given a specific working framework from the current government with a certain political composition. The government is left with the final decision, based on both political and professional concerns. The media’s portraying of the different roles of these different institutions might be confusing and even misleading, particularly when based on tabloid headings and approaches.

Traditional Culture is Threatened

All of my local informants, either explicitly or more implicitly, expressed a general concern for the future of traditional culture in Trillemarka. The establishment of the

nature reserve was perceived as just another element constituting a threat towards traditional culture.

- *Cultural landscape*

During a walking interview with a local informant in the south-eastern part of the nature reserve, we discovered several occurrences of the fungi *fomitopsis rosea* growing on a decaying shieling. This species mainly grows on dead and decaying old spruces (Hofton 2011:298). The fact that this fungi, which is listed as ‘near threatened’ in the 2010 Norwegian Red List (Artsdatabanken 2010), seemed to be thriving on a cultural product of human labour, i.e. this wooden, decaying shieling, served as an illustration for my local informant that the threatened species’ biggest enemy is not traditional use of the area- it’s rather the opposite! According to this view, the relationship between nature and humans are closely interlinked.

We cannot escape the fact that we are human beings, perceiving the world through human lenses. It is easier for humans to relate to nature, biodiversity and threatened species, if we can place these concepts in a human-nature relationship. Fischer and Hajer are examples of scholars regretting that the discourse on environmental policy is “plagued by the fact that it has been cut off from the cultural dimension of environmental politics” (1996:6). Indeed, drawing a sharp dichotomy between human settlement and external “natural” environment is destructive if aiming for a more environmentally friendly way of living (Croll and Parkin 1992:3). For many people, it is hard to understand why we should conserve “all that valuable nature”, if the reasons does not directly relate to human purposes and benefits. One of the arguments that many conservationists apply to emphasize the importance of conservation, is that future medicines and thereby our health and livelihoods, depends on biodiversity (e.g. IUCN 2012). This argument draws a direct link between humans and biodiversity, which makes it easier accessible for people to understand conservationist arguments. But the recurrent argument for conservation of biodiversity in the accounts of my conservationist informants was rather that every species has an intrinsic value in itself. This might be harder to grasp for someone

who has a more resource-based approach to nature. One of the forest owners put it this way:

Nature is wonderful by itself, but it is when you learn about how humans have been living and used this nature, that I think it really becomes interesting. (F#5)

- *“The best way to conserve is through use”*

The majority of my local informants stated that biodiversity depends on traditional use of natural resources. Nature tends to be seen as a resource which should be extracted, and biodiversity depends on human activity such as traditional and sustainable logging, transhumance and agriculture. Several of my local informants claimed to identify with green values, and three of the forest owners even explicitly called themselves “conservationists” [*naturvernere*] (M#15, F#16, F#17). But these informants also made it clear that their environmentalism differed substantially from the narrow, expert-knowledge based approach of organizations such as NSCN and Nature and Youth. A majority of my local informants argued that these organizations believed in “cheese dome conservation” where the area in question is left untouched by human activity in order to secure the natural dynamics of nature. A mayor in one of the three municipalities claimed that cheese dome conservation leads to disappearance of certain species due to lack of grazing, fertilizing and human paths (M#2). Another mayor proclaimed that he “disagrees with the cheese dome conservation at a professional basis (...) because you cannot conserve anything if there is no dynamic involved” (M#15). This dynamic is understood as human interaction with nature. One of the forest owners defines ‘cheese dome conservation’ as

(...) that lack of understanding that people in a community actually is a part of the environment which is to be protected. (...) It can in a way be described as a politics of segregation where the community’s inhabitants are removed because they represent a threat towards the nature reserve, and so it all has to be put under a bureaucracy, centralized of course, because the locals don’t have any understanding (...). (F#16)

Another forest owner suspects that the government chooses to force [*tre nedover*] “a cheese dome” simply because it is easier for the authorities to relate to this type of forest management compared to others (F#34). A former mayor in one of the municipalities thinks “use and conservation is a good formula”, and gives credit to what he characterizes as holistic thinking [*mangfoldstenkning*] in the Nature Diversity Act of 2009 (M#15). My local informants tended to view conservationists’ and government’s focus on cheese dome conservation as a narrow perspective, which also favours an unsustainable practice in the long run. In their accounts, a resource-based approach to nature through traditional use was generally perceived as the most realistic, sustainable and democratic perspective.

Rural traditionalists tend to claim that local and traditional use represents a more genuine environmentalism compared to what modern environmentalists promote (Benjaminsen and Svarstad 2008:50). This resonates with my findings from the local accounts in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell. As previously mentioned, some of the local informants presented themselves as “conservationists” [*naturvernere*] with “green values”, claiming that their traditional use represented the most sustainable management of the area. “I think the most important conservation is through use” (e.g. G#10), was a recurrent statement in the local accounts.

According to Milbourne, an “environmentalization” of rural landscapes is often perceived as leading to restrictions on local and traditional use of natural resources (1997, after Tumusiime and Svarstad 2011). A large majority of my local informants did focus on the restrictions related to the establishment of the nature reserve. One of the forest owners portrayed it this way:

I have the impression that it [the forest] has in fact been conserved because of how it has been managed [*drevet*]. It has been proved that it [the area] has been logged for the last fifty-sixty years at least. And that could maybe serve as an indicator for a correct management, for conserving the biodiversity. So if we could have continued in the same way as we started, we would have managed to conserve it. As opposed to now, when we cannot touch it and in the end it becomes impassable [*uframkommelig*]. (F#29).

Despite a large majority of my local informants expressing satisfaction with the Regulations for the nature reserve [*verneforskriftene*], I did sense a clear tendency to

generally focus on negative consequences such as decreased impassability and loss of income from logging and future cabin industry when discussing the consequences of nature conservation in general.

Traditional Economic Activities are Threatened

A recurrent theme in the local accounts was that the establishment of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve has contributed to threatening traditional economic activities in the area. One of the forest owners explained that if a forest owner

“(…) loose let’s say two thirds of the forest which is part of the farm’s business which has made it possible to combine domestic animals with logging (...), then it might not take too long before you skip the animals because it turns out that you cannot live off what you get” (F#6)

One of the involved administrative staff stated that Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell is an area where the primary sector, mainly agriculture and forestry, has been historically important (A#1). The same informant claimed that although the conservation “doesn’t constitute that much objectively (...) the experience has been that it was a heavy intrusion in a region which is already under pressure” (ibid).

Several of the forest owners expressed anger and frustration when they brought up the theme of environmentalists claiming that the establishment of the nature reserve would only have minor economic consequences for the forest owners (e.g. F#12 and F#16). This was generally seen as yet another illustration of the ignorance and arrogance of conservationists regarding economic activities and cultural history in the affected municipalities.

Conservation as Symbol of the Increasing Power of the Urban, Environmentalist Elite

One of the forest owners perceived the behaviour of representatives of NSCN as “an attack on the community’s values” illustrating “a deeply rooted [*inngrodd*] lack of confidence for what the community represents [in terms of values]” (F#16). Quotes such as this one illustrates that the local population holds the community as an

important source of identification and loyalty, and that conservationists generally represent external forces or threats. There are several aspects indicating that the Local Narrative of Marginalization in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell can be perceived as part of what Benjaminsen and Svarstad has defined as a broader Norwegian “rural traditionalist discourse” (2008:49). This discourse is related to a sense of continued marginalization of rural communities caused by increasing pressure on agriculture to improve its efficiency as well as an “environmentalization” of rural affairs. Local opposition to forest conservation in Trillemarka is articulated as a narrative that seems to fit into a more general pattern of opposition to rural modernization in Norway and internationally (Tumusiime and Svarstad 2011).

In line with Michel Foucault, Kalland argues that discourses compete in defining the “truth” among a multitude of ways to perceive the world (2001, after Bråthen 2009:4). Furthermore, one discourse will often end up as framing the debate by dominating in the mass media and thereby becoming institutionally anchored. Other discourses will have to relate to this “hegemonic discourse”, Kalland explains (ibid). Those who manage to apply the tools of the discourse in the most efficient way are the ones who end up influencing environmental issues. Discursive tools may include channels such as the media, education, advertisement and political lobbying. Based on media research and the accounts of several of my informants (both local and external actors), it clearly appears that the conservationists managed to form the hegemonic discourse on conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell in the national media. This supports the findings of Bråthen (2009:39).

According to Brosius, environmental conflicts are battles over meanings and battles over resources (1999, after Benjaminsen and Svarstad 2008:2). Indeed, the conflict related to the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell was not just about material resources such as timber, cabins and red-listed species. An important element of the conflict was the discursive battle of meanings, values, identity and history. In her master thesis with fieldwork in Trillemarka from 2007, Bråthen examined the different discourses of respectively the local population and environmentalists (2009:98). She argued that the core of the conflict was about these two groups’ different concepts of nature. Whereas conservationists perceived the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell as representing an important symbol for Norwegian culture, it was – for her local informants - rather about whether the local population could

continue with their traditional way of living in the future (ibid). A large majority of my local informants gave the impression that establishing a nature reserve would threaten their livelihoods and opportunity for self-determination. This was claimed to be adding up to the difficulties that rural inhabitants already had to deal with in Norway. Bråthen (2009:98) also argued that the identity of the local population was closely related to where they lived and how they used the area. Conservationist claims that the local population represented a threat towards the area in question was, according to Bråthen, therefore seen as a threat towards their identity. This analysis resonates with my findings from analysis of the local accounts. In Chapter 5, I will go deeper into the topics of discursive battles (section 5.5) and different interpretations of the conservation (section 5.4.2).

Poor Economic Compensations

At the time I conducted my interviews, all of the affected forest owners had received a one-time monetary compensation for the forest which had been conserved in 2002. Nobody had received compensation from the second round of the conservation in 2008, although most of them had a clear idea about the approximate size of the final amount. A large majority of the interviewed forest owners found that they had been too poorly compensated for their share of conserved forest (e.g. F#4, F#6, F#10, F#12, F#16, F#31). A few of them expressed satisfaction with the compensation they had received, either given that it was supposed to only compensate for conserved standing timber (F#5, F#10, F#17, F#29) or since they wouldn't have logged the conserved forest anyways due to inaccessibility and unprofitability (F#4). But all of these informants specified that although they might be satisfied with the size of their compensation, they would much rather have kept their forest and avoided conservation in the first place.

All my local informants were unhappy with the compensations being almost purely calculated on the basis of standing, productive timber located at the property in question. Indeed, many of the conserved properties were located in high altitude, and therefore yielded relatively poor compensations due to sparse and low growth-rate forest. Bogs, tarns and mountains are important characteristics of high-altitude areas. A majority of my local informants argued that they would have preferred a yearly compensation, adjusted to the fluctuating prices of timber (e.g. F#4, F#5, F#6, F#10,

F#29, F#36). In fact, many forest owners expressed hopes that the timber prices would increase in the future, and they wanted this aspect to be included in the calculation of the compensations. Several of them also suggested that the compensations should have been based on a fixed amount for each square meter of conserved property, regardless of the qualities of the forest (e.g. F#17).

4.1.2 Non-apparent Themes

The four main foci in the Local Narrative of Marginalization have now been outlined. In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the situation of the local informants, it might be just as interesting to look at relevant issues *not* mentioned in the accounts. Two important topics seemed to be missing: the current practice of clear-cutting in modern forestry as well as the nature reserve's restrictions on construction, sale and rental of cabins in the area. There are several reasons why I have chosen to elaborate on these two topics.

First, the practice of clear-cutting in modern forestry seemed to be a non-issue among most of my local informants, as a contrast to this topic's frequent focus in the accounts of the interviewed conservationists.

Secondly, the area of Trillemarka is by many actors seen as an up-and-coming region for construction of new cabins due the beautiful nature, location relatively close to important cities such as Drammen, Kongsberg and Oslo, as well as the Norwegian market's constant craving for more cabins. Furthermore, business related to cabins appeared as a sensitive issue among my local informants when I brought up the topic. My informants among the conservationists, on the other hand, portrayed construction of new cabins as one of the main threats against biodiversity in the area.

Construction of New Cabins

Unlike the accounts of interviewed conservationists, none of the forest owners had construction of new cabins as any main topic in their accounts. Some of the forest owners even gave the impression that construction of new cabins in the area was a minor activity, and also subject to strict restrictions prior to the establishment of the nature reserve.

(...) one of the strengths of this area is that there has only been a minor extent of cabin construction here (...) (F#6)

Despite my snowball method and effort to get in touch with forest owners with different perspectives and background, the absence of construction of cabins in the accounts of the forest owners did indeed appear as a striking characteristic. Particularly given that a significant amount of attention was allocated economic losses in relation to the conservation. A representative from one of the involved conservation organizations put it this way:

When one cabin property gives you 700.000-800.000 NOK net, right away... You see your neighbour driving around in a great 'dollar smile'. Then your motivation has to be quite strong in order to conserve the biological values. (E#22)

Selling or rental of cabins and properties in Norwegian mountain areas is a highly profitable business. Given that several of the conservationists portrayed "(...) construction of cabins [as] the big topic of conflict" (e.g. B#37, E#21, E#22, E#20, B#19), I tried to pay particular attention to this topic in the accounts of the forest owners. However, my choice of semi-structured, open-ended interviews forced me to avoid being too interruptive or "leading" during the interviews. The quality of my data depended indeed on the confidence of my informants, and I constantly had to be aware of my questions and body language during the interviews. I was therefore cautious of bringing up the topic of cabins in relation to the nature reserve.

Exceptions

One of the forest owners, who claimed that he personally didn't think much of cabin building himself, stated that the forest owners in Sigdal were

a bit jealous on the eastern side [Rollag], because they [the property owners of Rollag] had taken advantage of their areas for construction of cabins,

experiencing a significant rise in prices, but we [the inhabitants of Sigdal] have totally lost that opportunity” (F#17).

It is however important to keep in mind that Sigdal as a municipality had almost three times higher revenues from sale of vacation properties compared to Rollag in 2012 (SSB 2013b, see section 3.1.5), but most of this activity is located at the eastern side of the municipality towards Krødsherad (Norefjell).

Only one of the forest owners expressed a deep concern for the expected future consequences if no measures had been implemented for conservation of biodiversity in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell:

(...) if no [conservation] process had been implemented at all, I think that construction of cabins would have eaten into (...) the nicest areas (...) and they are very vulnerable (...). Something negative for nature conservation would have happened. I am entirely convinced about that (F#16).

This forest owner had been one of the main driving forces behind the municipalities’ conservation alternative, but was also among the most critical voices against the more comprehensive conservation alternatives. This illustrates the heterogeneity of the forest owners.

Modern Forestry

A large majority of the forest owners gave an impression that they were only conducting forestry in a sustainable and careful way, just as their parents and grandparents had done it (e.g. F#5, F#10, F#29, F#31, F#35). And in the end, they were “punished with conservation”. One of the affected forest owners explained that

(...) it is hard for those many forest owners who have been managing their forest in a careful way, (...) and then the conservationists [*vernesida*] arrive and say that “we will conserve all this, and you [the forest owners] will not be allowed to do anything more with it”. And those who had logged the hardest, those who have ‘ruined’ the forest, they are left alone, because there is nothing more to take there, right. (F#5)

My informants from conservationist organizations, as well as both of the biologists, perceived this as romanticizing of forestry. “I think that the community’s inhabitants’ [*bygdefolkets*] use of the area is often being romanticized”, claimed one of them. A representative from one of the involved conservation organizations claimed that “clear-cutting in forestry is [like] a religion” (E#22), where old structures and traditional methods never get questioned. None of the interviewed representatives from conservationist organizations were satisfied with the current environmental standards and restrictions in Norwegian forestry. This stood in stark contrast to the local accounts, where confidence to the current forestry practices seemed to be high.

Exceptions

Although the interviewed forest owners generally portrayed current forestry practices as environmentally sustainable, a few of them did mention the structural challenges that Norwegian forestry is facing today. In order to secure decent profits, decrease in timber prices might result in less sustainable practices for extraction of timber. Over the course of the last thirty years, the timber prices calculated in today’s monetary value are more than halved (SSBb 2013). One of the forest owners referred to the 1950’s and the 1960’s as “a gold age when it comes to timber prices (...) But today, it is in fact very bad” (F#5).

During the interview, one of the forest owners presented a comprehensive lecture of what he perceived as the most problematic aspects with the current structures of modern forestry in Norway. He claimed that the blame for destroying biodiversity should be put on consumers of timber products, as well as society in general [*storsamfunnet*], and not on the loyal, hard-working and poorly paid foresters.

(...) the only known economy, for many forest owners, that is to log all the trees and send them to the industry and then you have to wait for a hundred years until next time the same procedure will take place. It is the modern society asking for access to timber for industrial purposes. (F#16)

Interestingly, some of the ideas of this forest owner were in line with two of my informants from involved conservation organizations (E#21 and E#22). These ideas

consist in the need for developing a more differentiated system for valuation of timber. The above-mentioned forest owner asked for “alternative value creation” [*alternativ verdiskapning*] where old-growth forest is more valued and can be used for other purposes than fast-growing and lower-quality timber. He also suggested that ecotourism and outdoor-activities could become integrated into the timber industry, as a means to incorporate different local businesses into one “larger package” which could procure more income. Higher profits would facilitate the focus on sustainability, also in forestry, he claimed.

Locals Favourable to the Conservation Process

Despite my attempt to get in touch with forest owners with different perspectives, I did not manage to talk to any forest owners who were favourable to the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell. A large majority of my local informants reacted in a negative or denying way when I specifically asked whether anyone in the three municipalities were favourable to the establishment of the nature reserve.

A majority of the mayors as well as some of the forest owners explicitly underlined that the municipalities were unanimously united in their opposition against the establishment of the nature reserve. Also within each of the three municipalities, I got the impression that everyone was opposed to the conservation. One of the forest owners put it this way:

(...) it has been unanimity in all of the three Municipal Councils (...). You know, the more local it is, the more unanimous is the attitude. During the local hearing [for the suggested conservation alternative from the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management], 33 responses were sent, and everyone agreed with us. No one, or maybe only one cabin owner, had a deviating view (F#4).

I have not succeeded in achieving reliable statistical data in order to evaluate the general local opinion on the conservation of the area. However, in a survey from 2006 conducted by Norstat on behalf of the three affected municipalities, 20 % of the 300 respondents answered that they were positive to two of the most comprehensive conservation alternatives recommended by respectively the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research and the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management

(Aftenposten 22.10.06). In this poll, 300 out of the almost 7.000 inhabitants in the three municipalities participated. 30 % stated that they did not support the municipalities' conservation alternative, whereas over 60 % were supportive of it. Interestingly, it was only the informants from conservationist organizations, as well as the two involved biologists, who mentioned this survey during the interviews. These informants presented it as though almost one out of three did not support the municipalities' conservation alternative. The local newspaper in Sigdal, on the other hand, presented the news by stating that "only 20 % are favourable to the conservation alternatives from respectively the environmental organizations and the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management" (Bygdeposten 23.10.06).

Although I cannot make any definite conclusions based on this survey, it does support my assumption based on the local accounts that there were indeed some local inhabitants who were favourable to the more comprehensive conservation alternatives. But none of these have been present in public debates.

Exceptions

In the local accounts, there were however some examples of informants indicating that some local inhabitants might in fact have been supportive of the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell. One of the forest owners didn't want to mention any names, but he said that some of the local inhabitants, being neither farmers nor forest owners, tend to have a negative relationship towards farmers and forest owners due to for instance difficult family histories. He explained that

(...) when something happens, then it is like: "Finally, the farmers will pay!"
(...) That is a feeling I have for some, but we are now talking about exceptions. (F#16)

It does indeed seem natural that those who are directly affected by the conservation also are the ones who are the most negative towards it. Local inhabitants with jobs outside of forestry and business related to cabins might be more likely to have either indifferent or positive approaches to the conservation.

4.2 A Local Narrative of Pragmatic Adjustment

During my fieldwork in 2012, i.e. almost four years after the inauguration of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve, I asked my local informants how they perceived the current situation. The most recurring perspective was a pragmatic approach of adjusting to the current situation. Although close to all of my local informants expressed that they were now trying to look forward, consolidate with and take advantage of the existence of the nature reserve, they still found both the conservation process and the outcome unfair. The theme of pragmatic adjustment will therefore be the main focus in this presentation and analysis of the Local Narrative of Pragmatic Adjustment.

4.2.1 Main Foci

The Local Narrative of Pragmatic Adjustment contains three main foci appearing frequently in the local accounts. The first one describes how the local population in 2012 tries to consolidate with both the conservation process and outcome, which are still perceived as generally unfair. The second recounts how many of the locals still need time to digest both the process and outcome of the conservation. The third describes how most of the local population is now attempting to turn the establishment of the nature reserve to their own advantage.

“Things have calmed down”

One of the most frequent expressions in the local accounts when I asked how they perceived their current situation (in 2012), was that “things have calmed down” [*ting har roet seg*]. The following quotes illustrate some examples of the ways in which local informants expressed this: “I guess the conservation has been accepted, because there is nothing left to do about it” (F#29), “I have the feeling that most people have let go of their frustrations” (F#36) and “We just have to move on and accept the state of affairs. There is nothing else left that could be done with this” (A#9). My local informants have taken into account that the establishment of the nature reserve has now become reality, and that nothing could change what has already been decided

upon. Behind this attitude, I distinguished an underlying wish of self-protection. It appeared as though the local population had understood that it would be a waste of energy to continue the fight against the conservation. A majority of the interviewed forest owners described the conservation process as a tough experience on a personal level, and many of them therefore had a period of low-energy in the aftermath of the inauguration of the nature reserve (e.g. F#10, F#12, F#16, F#32 and F#6).

Still Need Time to Digest

One of the indications that my local informants still needed time to “digest” the conservation, was the typical reaction that the topic evoked for my local informants. Some would automatically raise their voices, some would show frustration, anger and sadness, and some would even become so emotional that I had to reconsider and avoid some of the planned questions in my interview guide. A mayor in one of the affected municipalities explained that

(...) some almost go through a process of mourning when they are prohibited from managing what actually belongs to them and generations ahead of them have taken care of [*holdt i hevd*]. (M#14)

Forest conservation is here implicitly described as a highly unfair intrusion into innocent forest owners’ life, having major personal impact. Furthermore, the same mayor described that

(...) the energy or the “gunpowder” [*krutt*] was burned out due to the whole process, because people expected that the municipalities’ conservation alternative was going to be accepted. People had been working so hard for this, and we felt that it was well and broadly anchored [*forankret*] since we had the County Governor on board, so many people got a bit depressed [*”gikk litt kjelleren”*] when they [the government] announced that it didn’t go through (...). So some of the focus on possibilities and inspiration and creativity, it entered a phase of hibernation. (M#14)

One of the forest owners even had a proper suitcase reserved for documents related to the conservation process. By actually reopening the “Trillemarka-suitcase” during our conversation, this informant told me that he made an exception for me, since he

originally had decided never to reopen the suitcase after the conservation was decided upon. The reason for this, he explained, was that he didn't want to spend any more time on the topic since it had already taken up way too much time (G#32). The suitcase was described as containing "many years of misery [*elendighet*]" (ibid).

Slightly Optimistic View on the Future

One of the local administrative staff claimed that "Most of the locals now accept that we have entered into a management phase" (A#18). Instead of having to fight against a potential future conservation, the municipalities can rather concentrate on the management of the area through the Local Management Board [*Forvaltningsstyret*]. All of my local informants approved of the allocation of management responsibilities to a local management board. All of the interviewed former and current mayors perceived this measure as a pay-off for the municipalities and forest owners' comprehensive effort in putting together the municipalities' conservation alternative. Delegation of management to this local board was seen as a compensation for the government's choice of a more comprehensive conservation alternative.

Some of the local informants also mentioned possible positive effects of the name of Trillemarka being used as a brand in the future:

Managing to see Trillemarka as something positive for the future, has taken some time, but I can now see that the name 'Trillemarka' is actually quite well known for those who are renting out cabins for instance (F#36).

It is important to underline that this optimism related to the reputation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell was only shared by a few of the forest owners, and these accounts usually involved some hints of hesitance and uncertainty. Several of the informants underlined the limitations for development of local business in relation to the nature reserve. One of the former mayors stated that

(...) it is of course limitations as to alternatives that it is possible to link to this [the nature reserve], and what the conservation gives in terms of possibilities and such. (M#14)

4.2.2 Non-apparent Themes

The three main foci in the Local Narrative of Pragmatic Adjustment have now been outlined. Two important matters seemed to receive less attention in the local accounts: the impact of the Local Business Development Fund, as well as the consequences of the establishment of the nature reserve on tourism in the three municipalities. These topics were both discussed during my interviews, but mainly as a result of my bringing up the topic at the end of the interviews. In the following section, I will briefly elaborate on why I chose the two above-mentioned topics.

The Local Business Development Fund

In the aftermath of the establishment of the nature reserve, the state government decided to allocate 30 million NOK in the form of a Local Business Development Fund as an ecological fiscal transfer to the affected municipalities. This fund was established in 2009, and the money was to be paid over a period of five years. The municipalities decided to organize the fund as a trust fund, where only the yield would be available for spending. The purpose of this fund was to “compensate the local community for the loss of ripple effects from forestry” (Sigdal kommune 2013b). Prior to the fieldwork, I was expecting this fund to appear in the local accounts, without me bringing up the topic. This did not turn out to be the case.

When I did bring up the topic, all of my local informants seemed generally positive to the idea of this type of fund. However, none of the local informants were satisfied with the total amount of 30 million NOK, and they generally found that the fund so far only had minor effect on the situation of local business in their respective municipality. “No, I don’t really think it [the fund] has had any significant impact” (i.e. F#5), was a common answer when I asked the local informants for their thoughts on the fund. One of the local administrative staff put it this way:

So far, the Local Business Development Fund has not contributed with much development of local business. But it is meant as a long-term fund, where the yield is to be spent on common projects. But we might have a different situation in the future, where the conditions are more favourable (A#18).

The interviewed former and current mayors generally perceived the trust fund as a “consolation” for the outcome of the conservation process and as a symbol of gratitude for local municipalities’ willingness to present a voluntary conservation alternative. A mayor in one of the affected municipalities said:

Yes, we were fighting for a local business development fund, and given the volatile [*betent*] character of the case, we got what we wanted. And politics is also about taking advantage of the situation, so when the adversary is unbalanced, one just has to break through... (M#15).

Several local informants showed disappointment over the fund because they had expected it to only be directed at the affected forest owners (e.g. F#10). A mayor explained that many forest owners had expected the fund to function as a direct compensation for the people who suffered a loss due to the conservation (M#3).

Most of my local informants perceived the direct economic compensations as substantially more important than the Local Business Development Fund. Many of them underlined that the fund only yields minor amounts, given that it is organized as a trust fund. Some forest owners thought that spending the 30 million NOK on higher direct compensations instead of establishing a fund would have created more legitimacy for the nature reserve. “(...) it [the fund] may create some jobs, well it already has, but it doesn’t affect the actual losses” (F#10), one of the forest owners explained. A former mayor argued for the need to transform the fund into an investment fund where the whole amount is accessible for spending. This would secure funding for comprehensive projects today that the municipalities could earn money from in the future (M#15).

Some of the interviewed forest owners did not have any clear opinions on the topic of the trust fund, as they claimed that they did not know much about it (e.g. F#4, F#29, F#35). There may be many explanations for this. Maybe it is due to poor communication from the Local Management Board or the municipalities, or it might be interpreted as the fund not being seen as relevant for the forest owners. Subsequent to a difficult and time-consuming conservation process, some forest owners might also have needed to avoid issues related to the conservation process, including the Local Business Development Fund (e.g. F#16, F#29).

Exceptions

The only local informant without any critical perspectives on the Local Business Development Fund was a forest owner who said the following:

I perceive the Local Business Development Fund as very important. This is because many are a lot more affected than I am, and they are maybe depending on receiving support in order to create a new business. (F#36)

Possible explanations for this unconditional positive view might be lack of knowledge on the actual impacts and arrangement of the fund, or lack of peers with negative experiences or critical views on the topic. The general impression from the local accounts was nevertheless that a large majority was positive to the idea of such a fund, but that it was inefficiently organized and that the actual amount was insufficient.

Increased Tourism

A frequent topic among actors arguing for the most comprehensive conservation alternatives was that the conservation would lead to increased tourism, and thereby increased income for the municipalities (e.g. Nationen 11.10.06). Instead of earning money from logging and construction of cabins, it was frequently argued that the local population should rather shift towards sustainable, nature-based tourism. This transformation of business focus was typically presented as easily implementable.

However, none of my local informants mentioned the nature reserve's effects on tourism, without my explicitly bringing up this topic. When I asked explicitly about it, most of my local informants claimed that they didn't think the establishment of the nature reserve had affected for instance the demand for renting and sale of cabins. But at the same time, most of them also claimed that 'Trillemarka' was about to develop into a type of 'brand-name' that could possibly attract more tourists in the future. One of the visible signs of this was advertising boards for cabins or cabin properties close to the nature reserve where the name 'Trillemarka' tended to be highlighted. "It is an argument property owners use in order to turn it [the nature reserve] into a positive thing", stated one of the forest owners (F#29). Another one

claimed that “(...) some finds it really nice to have such an area nearby” (F#31). Quite a few of the local informants did underline that they thought it was too early to say anything about the nature reserve’s possible impacts on tourism. An interviewed mayor stated that “There is a hope for the future, though, that there will be something around it [the nature reserve]” (M#14).

I could distinguish a slight optimism among my local informants on the nature reserve’s possible impacts on tourism. However, it would be to exaggerate to talk about enthusiasm. Only one of the local informants was exclusively optimistic:

Trillemarka is a name which has become very well known in relation to tourism. I am renting out a cabin situated 30 metres from the nature reserve, and I have used the brand ‘Trillemarka’ for what it is worth. (...) and I have seen that this has worked out in the marketing (F#36).

Local informants mentioned several possibilities for tourism-related activities in relation to the nature reserve: bicycling, hiking, guiding with focus on red-listed species or cultural history and eco-tourism to renovated shielings or old storehouses with homemade, local and traditional meals. There are already some initiatives established, for instance “Night at a *Stabbur*: The World’s Smallest Hotel Chain” [*Stabbursnatt: Verdens Minste Hotellkjede*] with accommodation at an old, renovated granary (*Stabbur*) located at various farms surrounding the nature reserve. Another important initiative is the “Trillemarka app”, a software application for mobile devices developed as part of the EU-initiated project VER-DI. This app consists of a map of the nature reserve with icons which can guide you to different experiences, accommodations and events. Many of my local informants highlighted that the current initiatives and tourist options related to Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell need to be integrated into “a more comprehensive package” (e.g. M#15) in order to secure economic sustainability.

Exceptions

Only a few of the local informants clearly doubted any positive effects of the conservation on tourism:

In the beginning, I really believed in the brand of ‘Trillemarka’, but that is not the case anymore. I don’t think it is that well known, I think it is only known in a few special groups. During the big debate, I think many people got to know about the area. But we didn’t manage to take advantage of this quickly enough (F#34).

Several local informants stated that it is not easy for everyone, especially not for those who are a bit older, to

“(…)suddenly *fossj!* make people start thinking of local business development and behaving in a new way. In Trillemarka, we have traditionally been harvesting from forestry and agriculture, so it is not that easy to switch and start thinking.... It takes time!” (A#7).

An interviewed mayor stated that

(...) What you can arrange in terms of tourism inside of the nature reserve is quite limited. (...) There are restrictions on how many people you can bring in at once, and how much you can renovate your shieling, what type of boat you can have, motorized transport. There are a lot of restrictions in the Regulations (...) (M#2).

4.3 Plot Development and Actors

In this section, findings concerning structure will be briefly presented. I will present and compare two different individual accounts from my sample before discussing them in relation to The Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment. Understanding the themes of marginalization and pragmatic adjustment is essential in order to understand the structure of the narrative and vice versa.

4.3.1 A Narrative of Decline

As mentioned in Chapter 2, plot development within a narrative can be either progressive, steady or declining (or a mixture of several of these). With these three possible courses of development in mind, I will now present two different stories from my sample that I have found to be illustrative for the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment.

(...) So we [a conglomeration of forest owners (*utmarkslag*)] had already come far in thinking of development related to business, farming, forestry and wilderness [*utmark*], until that work stopped in 2003. Some claim that now development of local business happen **because** of the establishment of the nature reserve. That might be the case for some, but for this area, we were put back ten years. In fact, we haven't managed to come back again where we were in 2003 when this conservation process put an end to the work that we had already accomplished. (F#16)

I: Was the work put back because of the conservation in itself, or because of everything that came with the conservation process, that people had a bad experience and so on?

F#16: Yes, both. And particularly the latter. Particularly the latter...

The above example is taken from an interview with one of the forest owners. An interesting feature in this extract is that the situation is clearly interpreted by the informant as developing from good to worse. The forest owner describes how the conglomeration of forest owners that he belongs to used to be innovative in linking alternative activities to existing local business prior to the conservation. Suddenly, when the conservation process was launched, the situation changed. This, the

informant claimed, was both due to the concrete restrictions related to the conservation, but also because of the negative feelings related to the process. The development in this individual plot clearly represents a narrative of decline. This becomes clear when identifying simple phrases such as “(...)we had already come far (...) until that work stopped in 2003”, “we were put back ten years”, and “we haven’t managed to come back again”. The description of a deteriorating change is also evident in the next example:

And now, everything will soon conserve itself, we don’t get anything for timber anymore; we don’t get anything for anything! (despaired voice). It [bushes, plants, grass] will grow and end up covering everything. And I cannot with my best intention imagine that this [*gjengroing*] is the best thing to do. (...) Before it used to be lots of grazing, and it was so nice! (...) And then, when the conservation process started, it was still so nice. And then you got everything with the temporary conservation, and then all the paths disappeared, you know, because there were bushes all over the place, you couldn’t get around the lakes, you couldn’t watch your domestic animals (...) (F#12).

The first account involves a description of how the process of establishing the nature reserve affected the conditions and motivation for development of alternative, local business. Although the two informants are presenting their own, individual stories from different municipalities, some of the elements are nevertheless strikingly similar. As in the previous example, the development of the plot is substantiated by phrases like “Before (...) it was so nice! (...) And then, you got everything with the temporary conservation, and then all the paths disappeared (...)”. Another similarity is that the establishment of the nature reserve is claimed to make the traditional way of living in the area impossible or constrained. The content of these two individual accounts seem to correspond well with the main content and plot of the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment. In all three municipalities, I found similar stories of how the conservation imposed constraints on both the traditional way of living and doing business, as well as the motivation for doing this; each story describing a situation of regression.

4.3.2 Actors Within the Narrative

Based on the local accounts, two main actor groups appear to be particularly prominent within the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment. On one side, we have the conservationists [*naturvernerne*], where the conservation organizations NSCN and Nature and Youth as well as the governmental agencies [*vernemyndighetene*] such as the Ministry of the Environment and the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management are central. On the other side, the local population, and particularly the affected forest owners, hold a central role in their own narrative. The quote below by one of the local administrative staff is illustrative for the local accounts:

I guess there are many of the conservationists who feel that the forest owners are being unserious in that they represent a “troll with several heads” [*et mangehodet troll*]. But that is in a way true as well, because there are a lot of forest owners, and none of them are the same. And then, I think there are many forest owners who feel that it doesn’t matter what they do, the conservationists will never get satisfied anyways. (A#9)

An interesting feature is how the Local Narrative seems to draw a picture of a story consisting of two opposing role characters where the conservationists play the role of “villains”. As shown in the following quote, direct statements and descriptions are given by the informants to clarify the conservationists’ role in the narrative:

The conservationists [*naturvernerne*] are people who have been sneaking around in our forest and written reports and have false claims about when we have been logging (F#32).

The characteristics of the conservationists in the local accounts show how the local informants highlight the distinction between “us” (the local population), and “them” (the villain conservationists). According to the quote above, the conservationists and their values represent the core of the conflict, characterized as greedy, rude thieves spreading “false claims”. The local people, on the other hand, are presented as representing victims of the conservationists’ bad behaviour, values and imposed restrictions.

Several of the local inhabitants expressed a sense of powerlessness. As one of the forest owners put it: “There was no dialogue in the [conservation] process whatsoever! So we felt powerless.” (F#12). However, not all of the local accounts described the local actors as passive victims. In the quote below by one of the affected forest owners, the local population is presented as more active:

Well, we [the forest owners] wanted to enter and influence as much as possible, even though that is quite a demanding strategy, because it requires that you will also be kept responsible for what you are doing. But we constantly tried to influence as much as possible, and we wanted to establish a management group [*styregruppe*]. But this didn’t succeed. It became an advisory group instead. I think that we did in a way contribute to the County Governor sympathizing with us every now and then [*kom oss litt i møte*] (...) And the municipalities’ conservation alternative (...) that we hoped could constitute a compromise, that was something that we really struggled to accomplish [*tyne oss fram til*]. (...) When we managed to gather all the forest owners behind it, that was a real strength, because it made us an entity! (F#4).

In this quote, the forest owners are still acting as one unit. However, in contrast to the previous descriptions, the local population is here presented as constructive, active and successful participants. Several local informants gave similar accounts where the local population work hard in finding a solution that could suit both conservationists and the local population:

It was not a coincidence that the municipalities’ conservation alternative came about (...), because it actually started in this area (...). We suggested it to someone central in The Norwegian Forest Owners’ Federation (...) So we asked the forest owners in our conglomeration of forest owners [*Utmarksområde*] if they would like to contribute to a voluntary conservation area that we were going to offer, given that we would agree on regulations etc. And we actually managed to do that. (F#16)

Hence, the self-image of the local population is mixed. Some portray themselves as passive victims of marginalization. Others project the local population as playing important and active roles in finding viable solutions within the given framework of the conservation process.

Exceptions

None of the local accounts seemed to differ from a plot development of decline. In other words, all the local informants narrated the conservation process as having important negative impacts on economic, cultural and mental aspects of the local populations' lives. Some of the local informants had a better overview of the formal procedures and organization of the conservation process than others, and could therefore be more precise in their reflections on the process and the involved actors. But these actors also divided involved conservation actors into two main actor groups, namely conservationists and local population.

It would be interesting to see how future generations in the three affected municipalities will narrate the conservation process in the future, partly based on accounts of their parents and grandparents. One of the local administrative staff had some reflection related to this:

I think that in a few years, people will generally feel all right about the conservation of seventy to eighty per cent of the nature reserve. Many thinks it is ok today, and more will follow. Maybe the next generation too. Maybe someone find it to be a positive thing as well? I know that some are of that opinion. But there are some conserved areas that I don't agree upon (...) [*because of what I find as*] clumsy drawing of conservation limits. That is provocative. When you cannot log timber for your roundpole fence [*skigard*] for instance⁸. (A#9)

⁸ The roundpole fence was common during older days to separate cultivated land (the farm) from uncultivated land. Today, it is mainly used for aesthetic purposes. In this quote, roundpole fence is used as an illustration for activities in the immediate surroundings of the farm which is not allowed if the conservation limits are drawn too close.

4.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented main findings on how the local population narrated the conservation of Trillemarka in 2012, four years after the inauguration of the nature reserve. The main foci of what I have described as a Local Narrative of Marginalization consist in the local population feeling excluded and marginalized from the process of decision-making, emphasising that their local, traditional experience-based knowledge was not taken into account. They also feel marginalized in comparison with environmental organizations, as the latter are perceived as being dominant in national media. The local population perceive the establishment of the nature reserve as a threat towards traditional culture and economic activities. Hence, it represents a threat towards the continued livelihoods in rural municipalities. The forest owners perceived the Local Business Development Fund and the economic compensations as too poor, and inefficiently organized. The main foci of the Local Narrative of Pragmatic Adjustment consist in the local informants slowly starting to accept the existence of the nature reserve, although they still perceive both the conservation process and outcome as unfair. Many of them still need time to digest the conservation process, and some presented a slightly optimistic view on the future.

There only seem to be a few minor differences in how the local population narrate the conservation of Trillemarka, and how they perceive their current situation in 2012. My local informants were still generally unhappy with the existence of the nature reserve, but many seem increasingly open and willing to look forward by exploring alternative ways of establishing local businesses in relation to the nature reserve. In 2012, the local population attempts to adapt to the framework of actions that the establishment of the nature reserve has created. My local informants announced that most of them are now trying to reconcile with both the process and the result of the establishment of the nature reserve, as a pragmatic approach to a difficult situation.

In the next chapter, I will continue discussing the last part of my second research question, namely why the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment does not reflect enhanced legitimacy despite economic benefits that were brought in on late stages in the conservation process. I will also suggest answers to my third and last research question.

5. A comparison Between the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment and the Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive Elements

In this chapter, I will present what I have identified as a Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive Elements produced by my external informants. I will briefly compare this narrative with the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment. This will help answering my second research question, i.e. why the local narrative *does not* reflect enhanced legitimacy despite economic benefits that were brought in on late stages in the conservation process. Furthermore, I will explain why the local narrative is so different from the win-win narrative on the same topic (i.e. my third research question) by exploring different interests and interpretations of forest conservation in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell among respectively interviewed conservationists and local informants. In this section, I will use elements from research on opposition against wolves conducted by mainly the sociologists Olve Krange and Ketil Skogen. Finally, I will discuss the claim that the local narrative was constructed as a result of the existing win-win narrative by applying Gregory Bateson's theory of 'schismogenesis' through Ottar Brox concept of 'expressive competition'.

5.1 Presentation of a Win-Win Narrative on Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell

During my interviews with non-local informants, the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell was typically presented as an example of a win-win practice. By non-local informants, I refer to representatives from the following institutions: the Ministry of the Environment, the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management, the County Governor of Buskerud, BioFokus, NINA, Nature and Youth as well as NSCN. It is important to emphasize that these informants do not constitute any homogenous group, and they also had clearly different roles during the conservation

process. I will nevertheless argue that their way of narrating the conservation to a certain extent justifies referring to them as one group for the purpose of clarity in this thesis. In the following section, I will explore the main foci of this win-win narrative by giving specific attention to the role of economic benefits for increased legitimacy. To what extent is economic benefits believed to represent a source for increased legitimacy for the affected local population of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, and how does the win-win narrative present the situation of the local population today?

5.1.1 Progressive Success Story Where All the Stakeholders End Up As Heroes

All of my non-local informants presented a conservation story of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell where the local population takes part in benefit sharing. While conserving biodiversity through establishing a nature reserve, the conservation was simultaneously claimed to be beneficial for local stakeholders such as forest owners and local business actors.

All of the interviewed representatives from involved conservation organizations considered the economic loss of affected forest owners as small, and claimed that the forest owners tended to exaggerate their economic loss related to the conservation (E#20, E#21, E#22 and E#26). They all referred to a report by the County Governor of Buskerud (2005:50-51) where it is estimated that only 3.4 man-years (years of full-time jobs) related to forestry and wood processing would be lost if the second largest conservation alternative was to be chosen (169.3 km²). Additionally, the report specified that the estimated loss of jobs would lead to a general decrease in local business and tax income for the affected municipalities (ibid:50). A representative from one of the involved conservationist organizations referred to the above-mentioned report, claiming that “it actually boiled down to only one forest owner in the planned conservation area of 205 km² who actually planned to log his forest himself” (E#26). Related to these statements is the claim that modern forestry mostly is being allocated to logging companies, and the revenues from forestry constituting a smaller share of the total income compared with only a few decades ago. On a more positive note, the establishment of a nature reserve was also expected

to encourage some possible positive economic benefits for the municipality, such as increased tourism (County Governor of Buskerud 2005:30).

Informants from involved conservationist organizations, Erik Solheim and some of the administrative staff expressed that they perceived the current one-time economic compensations as a relatively “good deal” for the affected forest owners. Many of them claimed that the economic compensations were “generous”, particularly when compared with current timber prices. Inaccessibility and high costs related to extraction of parts of the timber were also mentioned. All of the informants from conservationist organizations and a few of the interviewed forest owners mentioned a forest owner who voluntarily accepted that the government conserved 180 decares of his forest during the second round of the conservation process. According to the local newspaper of Sigdal, he received 3.2 million NOK in compensation, i.e. approximately 180 NOK per hectare (Bygdeposten, 01.02.06). One of the local administrative staff admitted that some of the affected forest owners actually were quite content with their compensations, but these individuals did not dare to express their view in public since they realized that their opinions belonged to a minority in the community (A#11).

The current environmental regulations for forestry were also mentioned as elements contributing to making one-time economic compensations a “good deal” for forest owners. An informant from one of the involved conservation organizations explains the mechanisms in the following way:

The forest owners offer forest conservation, which the forest industry needs. They [the forest industry] are pressured by their buyers from abroad, requiring environmentally friendly timber. As long as Norway fails to conserve enough forest, they [the forest industry] will continue receiving questions on whether they can be sure that the origins of the produced paper is not forests qualifying for conservation in Norway (E#26).

The quote above describes a win-win situation, where all involved stakeholders benefit from sustainable forest management. Thanks to international consumers of Norwegian timber requiring sustainable management of Norwegian forests, the Norwegian government and forest industry are pressured into adopting sustainable practice. These sustainable practices are beneficial for biodiversity, the reputation of

the Norwegian government and forest industry (and hence the timber business) as well as the consumers of Norwegian timber.

In addition to the one-time economic compensations, about half of the producers of a win-win narrative on the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell argued that the establishment of the Local Business Development Fund could be perceived as a benefit for the inhabitants of the three municipalities. One of the interviewed representatives from the involved conservation organizations was of the following opinion:

I think that just as important as the compensations, is that the community [*bygda*] feels that it receives something in return. So I think that one should do more of these things. (...) I think that the government could have been more generous when deciding on the amount allocated to the Local Business Development Fund (E#22).

All of the interviewed informants presenting a win-win narrative and claiming to have an opinion on the Local Business Development Fund (except from E#20 and B#19), admitted that the rents of 30 million NOK did not yield much money for the affected municipalities. An informant from one of the involved conservation organizations, on the other hand, complained that the government are most generous to those affected by conservation who make the most noise [*støy*] and who is located closest to Oslo (E#21). This view, he claimed, was supported by an article in *Ságat*, a Sámi newspaper from Finnmark, with the title “The government is the most generous towards those who scream the loudest and who is situated the closest to Oslo” (*Ságat* 09.12.08).

None of the external informants claimed to have any clear view on whether this fund actually had increased the local population’s sense of legitimacy for the conservation, since they claimed not to have followed the situation in the aftermath of 2008. But in general terms, such a fund was perceived as an important component in the benefit sharing entailed in the win-win conservation story. The two interviewed representatives from the Ministry of the Environment (A#27 and Erik Solheim) both underlined that establishing local business development funds was not part of the “normal” conservation politics when establishing new nature reserves.

The usual compensation for affected local actors, based in law, is to allocate direct, one-time, economic compensations for conserved forest (ibid). Erik Solheim also specified that the final amount of the Local Business Development Fund in Trillemarka was influenced by the concern of not creating precedence for affected municipalities expecting this type of fund in the aftermath of future conservation process. He explained that “(...) if you “butter up” [*smører*] conservation decisions with money, it will become more expensive to implement conservation, so that is the balance”.

Only one of the producers of the win-win narrative argued that economic instruments only had a relatively minor impact on the local population’s sense of legitimacy for conservation:

(...) I think that much of the conflict is about other things than economy; I think it is about attitudes and the forest owners in the area growing up with their traditional economic activities, thinking that this was what they [too] would do in the future. And now one has to mentally prepare for a new future, a new existence. This is reinforced by the fact that someone else has decided that it is now forbidden to log or build cabins in this area (...). I think the main conflict is about a fight for the right of deciding for oneself [*selvbestemmelsesrett*]. (...) I think you would need high levels of economic compensations before you can ease that feeling for some of the forest owners, particularly those who are against nature conservation almost by principle (B#19).

Interestingly, the establishment of the Local Business Development Fund was only brought up when I specifically asked about it, except for one of the non-local informants (who thought that the government had actually allocated 100 million NOK to the fund). It therefore seems as though the direct economic compensations were perceived as the most important economic benefit for the affected local population according to the win-win narrative. This characteristic is shared with the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment.

Although some of the external informants referred to the current situation in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell as a win-win situation, many tended to relate a win-win situation with how they pictured the future. Despite some current local resistance, producers of the win-win narrative claimed that the local population would accept

and even acknowledge the benefits of the conservation after a few years. Erik Solheim claimed that “luckily, for the most places in Norway where there has been a controversy related to the establishment of a conservation area, things have been a lot calmer a few years later”. An informant from one of the conservation organizations put it this way:

Maybe it takes a few years, and then the forest owner is content and thinks that maybe it [the conservation] turned out to be a smart thing to do. And if they [the forest owners] spend the compensation money wisely, it might give a higher yield compared with extracting timber that one time. And the Norwegian Forest Owners’ Federation always says that once they [the forest owners] receive their compensation, they are content (E#26).

Forest owners maintaining their rights for hunting and fishing in the conserved area was also mentioned as part of the win-win narrative. Additionally, the area in question could still be used for various outdoor activities for tourism, as long as this does not represent any threat towards the conservation objectives. Some of the informants mentioned that establishing the nature reserve could, in the future, attract more tourists interested in outdoor activities among rare species. Some of the affected forest owners and mayors made us aware of advertisement signs where “Trillemarka” was highlighted as an attractive brand (F#5, F#36, M#13). One of the interviewed administrative staff claimed that for

The cabins situated close [to the border of the nature reserve], the owners advertise with rental and sale by emphasizing that they are situated close to the biggest forest reserve in Norway, so it [the nature reserve] is already being applied in economic contexts (A#27).

One of the interviewed biologists told me that he recently discovered that some of the local grocery stores sold bread named ‘Trillemarka’, implying that the nature reserve was promoted as a positive thing. He found this interesting as he claimed that “this would have been impossible just 7-8 years ago” (B#37). When asking for perceptions on the current situation in the area, a recurrent statement in the accounts of my non-local informants was that “things have calmed down” (A#1, A#18, E#21, E#26).

In this win-win narrative, the interests of the affected local population are presented as coinciding with the interests of the conservationists. Simultaneously with conservation goals being fulfilled for conservationists, the local population affected receives economic benefits and new business opportunities. Given that the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell is perceived as a win-win situation, economic benefits for the affected local population are considered as crucial for the local population's sense of legitimacy for the conservation.

5.1.2 The Role of Local Residents in Decision-making Emphasized

During my fieldwork in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, all my non-local informants claimed that the conservation process had involved strategies emphasizing a participatory role of local residents. In their accounts, the three main aspects of local participation were allocation of management to the Local Management Board, the process leading to the Regulations of the area as well as the overarching Management Plan [*Forvaltningsplanen*]. External informants also mentioned meetings and events involving local actors prior to the establishment of the nature reserve as positive for local participation.

Local Management Board

Allocation of the management of the nature reserve to a local board, with a locally hired administrator was part of the municipalities' conservation alternative, and also an arrangement that the mayors fought for on behalf of their inhabitants. The usual practice is that the County Governor functions as administrative manager for conservation areas within the county. A few conservation areas are managed by an inter-municipal board with an administrator hired by the County Governor, who also has the overall administrative responsibility. According to my informant from the County Governor of Buskerud, the arrangement for Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell with a local management board situated in the area was perceived as a "conflict soothing measure" by all involved stakeholders. Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell is so far (July 2013) the only conservation area in Norway with a locally hired administrator and the municipalities as administrative responsible. A former mayor in one of the

municipalities explained that the composition of the Local Management Board was exactly how the municipalities had suggested it to be. “So that was one of the things for which we [the municipalities] gained acceptance. But we didn’t get the conservation alternative that we preferred” (M#3).

One of the interviewed biologists claimed that the Local Management Board provides the nature reserve with “good, local ownership [*forankring*] which might be important to ease the atmosphere a bit” (B#19). My informant from the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management expressed that he was not surprised by what he perceived as a well-functioning Local Management Board in Trillemarka-Raollgsfjell. He also had the impression that the collaboration with jurists from the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management so far had been smooth.

Regulations and Management Plan

While I conducted my fieldwork (May-October 2012), the Management Plan for the nature reserve was on hearings, and therefore not finished. I did, however, ask my informants how they perceived the process towards adopting a Management Plan. I also asked for reflections on the Regulations, which contained guidelines and a framework for the Management Plan.

I noticed that the topic of the Regulations and the Management Plan was given considerably more attention by my local informants compared to the non-local ones. Particularly the processes prior to the adaptation of these two arrangements were given attention. Conservationists, on the other hand, tended to focus solely on the outcome of the process, i.e. the Regulations and the Management Plan, and not on the process. This might be explained by local actors being directly affected by these arrangements, and therefore following the process more closely than external actors. With regards to the external informants who did bring up this topic or who had opinions on it, the Regulations and the Management Plan were often referred to as representing a relatively sound balance between use and conservation of the area in question. One of the interviewed biologists had the following reflections on the Regulations:

I think that the Regulations represent a good balance between (...) taking care of the existing [biological] qualities, at the same time as they don't cause any unnecessary disturbance for normal hiking, hunting and fishing, and one can use the area for grazing, and for those shielings and meadows where this is suitable, one can conduct appropriate management. Some logging for firewood for the already existing cabins within the nature reserve is legal and of practically no influence on the nature values. (B#19)

The content of the Regulations were also partly seen as a result of the Ministry of the Environment not choosing the municipalities' conservation alternative. One of the conservationists claimed that once the nature reserve was established, then the local population "cannot go against the conservation, but they can do something with the conservation regulations, right, so they [the Regulations] were a bit adjusted" (E#20). An interviewed employee from the Ministry of the Environment explained that the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell ended in an unusual way compared to other cases of forest conservation since the conclusion from the government about the final size of the nature reserve was not immediately followed by any regulations. Instead,

(...) much of the first part of the year 2008 was spent on a process together with the municipalities on details for the Regulations. And that is an unusual procedure. But it was fully a conscious step taken by Erik Solheim, in order to locally ground the future management [of the nature reserve].

Securing a safe future management of the area through negotiations with local actors on the Regulations, was seen as a political instrument by the interviewed representative from The Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management. Erik Solheim explained that in conservation processes "one has to give and take in order to achieve something for which there is sufficiently support for; it doesn't need to be a hundred per cent, but it cannot either be zero". Here, the chosen conservation alternative is perceived as securing the conservation goals, whereas the Regulations secure sufficient local support for a safe future management of the nature reserve. Involvement of local actors in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell is perceived as necessary in order to prevent the nature reserve from harmful destruction from local actors. It is therefore purely instrumental in achieving and securing the ultimate goal of conservation processes, i.e. conservation of biodiversity. Participation from local

actors is from this perspective not seen as a value in itself, but rather as an instrumental necessity.

An informant from one of the conservation organizations claimed that the area of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell is used more frequently today, compared to for five-six years ago (E#22). "I don't think this type of use [hiking, fishing, and hunting] represents any danger for the biodiversity", he specified. All of my external informants claiming to have opinions on the topic perceived the Regulations as generally in accordance with the conservation goals of preserving biodiversity.

Meetings and Events

All the external informants claimed that local participation in conservation processes is important, and that there had been various types of involvement of the local population prior to the establishment of the nature reserve.

From the very start (...), we included [the aim of] local ownership [*local forankring*] right away. On our [to-do] list, it said "meetings with forest owners, mayors, forest owner associations, local branches of Nature and Youth and The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature (...). (E#26)

The quote above is by an informant from the involved conservation organizations, illustrating the views of the other interviewees from Nature and Youth and NSCN. In order to support the claim that conservationist organizations really do take local involvement seriously, the informant referred to a report named "Conservation for the Future – A Sustainable Conservation Process" made as a collaboration between Nature and Youth on the one hand, and The Norwegian Forest Owner Association, Norskog and Norske Skog on the other hand (Larsen 2002). Initiated by Nature and Youth, my informant claimed that the organization through this report wanted to explore common interests and achieve a deeper understanding for the perspectives of forest owners and associations, in order to decrease the conflict levels associated with conservation processes. In-depth interviews with forest owners on their views on forest conservation were the main sources of knowledge for this report.

One of the interviewed biologists told about two excursions [*befaringer*] with the goal being practical information and “reducing the psychological distance between on the one hand administration and biologists [*utredere*] and on the other hand the forest owners” (B#37). The informant from the Ministry of the Environment recounted that forest owners from Trillemarka on several occasions attended meetings in the Ministry, sometimes with participation from political leadership (A#27). All the informants from involved conservation organizations claimed that the forest owners tended to argue that no one listened to their views and perspectives. In response to this, an informant from the involved conservation organization said that

(...) this is to me totally incomprehensible, because they [the forest owners] have the same possibility to engage in community affairs. Cases of nature conservation are to be debated in the Municipal Council and the cases under the Planning and Building Act are automatically sent on hearings. And when national government [*sentrale styringsmakter*] have invited to meetings and excursions [*befaringer*] and such, sometimes members of The Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature have been excluded whereas forest owners have been allowed access. (E#20)

Three of the four informants from involved conservation organizations, as well as one of the two biologists complained that they found it difficult to communicate and discuss with the forest owners without risking verbal threats and various forms of harassment (B#19, E#20, E#21, E#22). These four all told me, unsolicited, about a meeting in Eggedal initiated by the County Governor in Buskerud where more than half of the audience in protest had left the room before the conservationists had the chance to voice their opinions, because the audience did not want to listen to more “conservationist non-sense” (Drammens Tidende 30.08.04). The four above-mentioned informants speculated that the forest owners were inspired by a statement in Report no. 21 to the *Storting* (2004-2005) that they claimed stated that “the government would try to avoid conservation in the areas with high levels of conflict”. When actually looking up this White Paper, the wording turned out to be a bit more nuanced:

The Parliament asks the Government to work on a strategy, in collaboration with the organizations within the primary sector, for reduction of the level of conflict in nature management. (...) It is however not realistic to expect that

every conflict of interest or disagreement related to management of nature would disappear. (Section 3.3.1; Report no. 21 to the *Storting* 2004-2005)

One of the biologists, in line with the majority of my external informants, emphasized that the final result of the conservation process did in fact boil down to about 50 km² less than the recommendation of researchers at NINA and Biofokus (about 205 km²): “So that is a result of inputs and meeting them [the forest owners] halfway. So I think that it was a quite strong compromise, given that several areas of high conservation value were actually not included in the protected area” (B#19). This informant is here providing a picture of local participation as actually influencing the final *outcome* of the conservation process.

In this win-win narrative, conservation goals are presented as being fulfilled, at the same time as the local population managed to limit the size of the final conservation area through active involvement. Both participation and economic benefits are seen as necessary in order to secure a win-win situation. Producers of this narrative gave the impression that the local population were better off after the establishment of the nature reserve, due to economic compensations, establishment of the Local Business Development Fund and improved possibilities for tourism.

5.2 Presentation of Preservationist Discursive Elements on Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell

My informants from involved conservation organizations as well as the two interviewed biologists all presented accounts containing elements from a preservationist discourse. In this section, I will briefly explore the main foci of these preservationist discursive elements.

5.2.1 Pristine, “Untouched” Nature or Wilderness as an Ideal

In the article “Expert Systems, Local Knowledge and Power in Argyll, Scotland”, Karen L. V. Syse draws a distinction between biodiversity as something quantifiable, and aesthetics as being “in the eyes of the beholder” (2010:475). Furthermore, she claims that the aesthetic of the picturesque, influential in environmental conservation,

(...) admires the idea of ‘pure nature’ unaffected by humans. People’s influence through farming and settlement is only tolerated if the changes happened before the industrial or modern era; if the houses are picturesque and stone-built, and if the farming practice can somehow enhance an idea of retrospective biodiversity or perhaps sustain an image of the past (ibid).

A recurrent ideal among my informants from conservation organizations as well as the interviewed biologists was nature as pristine, “untouched” wilderness without any influence from forestry or cabins. The narratives of three out of the four interviewed representatives from involved environmental organizations, as well as one of the involved biologists were clearly characterized by preservationist discursive elements. Concepts such as “untouched [*urørt*] nature” (B#19), “wilderness” [*villmark*] (E#22, E#21) and “primeval forest” [*urskog*] (E#22, E#21, E#20) were all mentioned in their descriptions of specific parts of Trillemarka. These concepts were applied in different contexts, and often nuanced or followed with a precondition.

One of the above-mentioned informants told about a cabin being constructed during the conservation process, in a previously intrusion-free [*inngrepsfri*] valley.

It [the valley] was only surrounded by the lake, the mountains and old-growth forest of high biological value. It was a very nice landscape [*landskapsrom*]. And with this cabin, the whole area is completely changed, and very privatized. (...) I would call it a serious deterioration [*forringelse*] of one of the finest landscapes in the whole conservation area. (B#19)

In the quote above, we can detect a narrative of regression, implying deterioration or decline related to the event in question. The construction of a cabin is perceived as “deteriorating” and “privatizing” a whole landscape, leading to a clearly negative change. The same informant also questioned the amount of tourist facilitations in the area, and was clearly in favor of adjusting as little as possible within the nature reserve:

If your target group is American cruise tourists, then you have to have a lot of facilitations. But if your target is to attract those who prefer wilderness activities [*villmarkinger*], then it is maybe better to have as little facilitations as possible. (...) Why should we implement a number of measures inside a conservation area, when there is plenty of space outside suitable for people seeking high-standard facilitations? (B#19)

These accounts imply that human influence on “natural” nature is wrong in itself, due to the negative impact on the “natural” course of the ecosystems. An informant from one of the involved conservation organizations put it this way:

The forest manages well without humans having to take care of it, forestry is not necessary for biodiversity in the forest to survive. Because it [the forest] has survived for hundreds of millions of years, well, for a really long time, without human interference. (E#20)

One of the involved biologists questioned what he perceived as a narrow focus on human benefit in Western tradition (B#19). The informant argued that we tend to ask ourselves “what type of benefit could we draw from this particular species?” Furthermore, he claimed that

(...) the one clear argument for all species’ right to exist is simply that the evolution has procured them. That is quite basic. They don’t need to have any

beneficial function at all, I think, for us to take care of it. They have the right to survive just because they exist. (B#19)

Bringing in the nineteenth century American transcendentalist writer Ralph W. Emerson, Coates summarizes Aristotles' distinction between natural and artificial entities into the created and the creative (i.e. culture and human) on the one hand, and the uncreated (i.e. nature) on the other (Coates 1998:6). It seems plausible to argue that the narratives explored above have the uncreated, "natural" nature as the ultimate aesthetic ideal for nature reserves.

In fact, all of the representatives from involved conservation organizations as well as the two biologists did nuance their views during the interview. When I brought up the theme of 'untouched' [*urørt*] nature or 'wilderness', one informant from the involved conservation organizations provided the following reflections:

How "untouched" is really "untouched"? Well, you can say that radioactive material from the Chernobyl disaster was dropping down, and we got acid rain, so if you want to draw it very far, then there is nothing untouched on this planet. Where should that have been? In relation to forest areas, there are a few tiny areas which haven't experienced axe, or it is only a microscopic influence from logging a long time ago. But you really have to look for a long time, to find this. And it is not a lot. So we are talking about "untouched" to a smaller or larger extent. (E#21)

Along the same lines, another informant from the involved conservation organizations specified:

Well, when we talk about forest conservation, we don't talk about untouched things, we talk about the least influenced areas (...). And there is no one from our side [the conservation organization that this informant is representing] claiming that Trillemarka is untouched. We are being told that we call this "primeval forest" [*urskog*]... The media is good at writing "primeval forest". So some places, "primeval forest" has been referred to in the media, although we have been more precise in our wording (E#22).

Although the above-mentioned informants nuanced their views in this manner, the narratives presented were nevertheless consistently "colored" by a preservationist view on nature. This is also the case for the rest of the narratives with preservationist

discursive elements. The last quote, for instance, belongs to a conservationist who during the very same interview also expressed that Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell “was the most important remaining forest area in Norway, due to its “untouched” character [urørthet] and size” (E#22). By “untouched”, this informant specified that he referred to the lack of changes which accompanies modern industrial forestry, i.e. mainly clear-cutting of forest. The nuancing comments above may be seen as a result of repeating critique from the part of the forest owners, continuously claiming that Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell is an area which has been extensively logged thought-out the years, and therefore fails to be described as “untouched” wilderness.

5.2.2 Needs, Interests and Involvement of Local Resource Users Ignored

In addition to the underlying ideal of pristine, “untouched” nature, the accounts with preservationist discursive elements were also characterized by a negative view on local resource users. Some elements in these accounts implied a neglect of the needs, interests and involvement of local users of the area. All of the informants from involved conservation organizations, one of the biologists and some of the non-local administrative staff produced this type of accounts.

A recurrent theme was the claim that the local population of Trillemarka tended to romanticize the ethics, behaviors, practices and knowledge of forest owners (E#20, E#19, E#22, E#21). Local informants’ claim that the area is valuable *thanks* to sustainable use throughout the years (transhumance and logging), was typically met by biologists and conservationists saying that the area is valuable, not thanks to, but *despite* previous logging, building of forest roads and other use of the area (A#27, E#22, E#21, E#20, B#19). They claimed that the main reason why the area is so valuable can be traced back to the area’s great amount of old-growth forest being less disturbed compared to most of the rest of Norway, which is dominated by managed and clear-cut forests. A former mayor claimed that

Conservation was necessary because cabins will be constructed and cabin properties will be sold when this is seen as necessary in order to capitalize the wealth. If this [construction of cabins and sale of cabin properties] is not done, it is due to purely economic considerations, and not from a conservationist perspective. (M#15)

During my interviews, all of the conservationist informants specified that it is important to distinguish between two types of areas; cultural landscapes such as meadows or areas with pollarding-friendly tree species, and “natural” landscapes (E#20 E#22, B#19). The former depends on human management [*skjøtsel*], whereas the latter is best off when left to its own development. One of the informants from the involved conservation organizations argued that

There is a lack of understanding for the existence of two types of values within biodiversity. We have those which exist because nature has been allowed to rule by itself, without human beings destroying its basis for existence. And then we have the species which are so specialized that they have found its niche within an area extensively influenced by humans (E#22).

The same informant did recognize that some of the biodiversity in Trillemarka is indeed situated within cultural landscapes, but he also specified that it is the “natural” landscapes which constitute the main and “real” conservation values of the area. One of the interviewed biologists explained that

(...) out in the forest, even selective felling will contribute to diminish the average age of the trees in the area. The big dimensions will disappear and access to dead timber will decrease, and this has negative consequences for the diversity of species related to old trees and dead wood in this area. Selective logging has less negative impact on biodiversity than clear-cutting, although biodiversity research and well-established empirical knowledge do show that even selective logging has a strong negative impact on biodiversity (B#19).

Furthermore, informants with accounts characterized by preservationist discursive elements, claimed that modern forestry is unsustainable, and cannot be compared to previous practices with regards to the influence on biodiversity. “There are no species whose existence depend on clear-cutting [of forest]”, one of the informants from the conservationist organizations rhetorically pointed out (E#22). The conclusion drawn was that “cheese dome conservation is actually necessary if you are to conserve the [vulnerable] species” (ibid).

The same informants were also critical towards the allocation of management of the nature reserve to the Local Management Board, claiming that those types of boards “tend to consist of politicians who want to push the limits [of the Regulations] as far as possible” (E#20). This, he claimed, goes at the expense of the conservation of biodiversity. Another informant from the involved conservation organizations complained that local management of natural resources of national or even international importance, risk to incorporate irrational “noise” [*støy*] from neighbors and friends in the municipality into the decision-making (E#21). According to the same informant, we then risk to lose both objectivity and fairness, principles that a knowledge-based decision-making would have secured. Along the same lines, one of the interviewed biologists claimed that some cases of nature management

could be judged of such high national importance that it might be difficult to see all the arguments when you live close to the area in question. And it is, after all, important to keep some distance to the cases (...). This is the classic conflict between local economic use and national or international biodiversity conservation (B#19).

One of the informants from involved conservation organizations explained his organization’s negative attitude towards delegation of management authority to local representatives in the following way:

We don’t have much faith in local management, since we think that proximity between local politicians and strong forces in the community are so powerful, that it will fail to conserve national interests if these go at the expense of the interests of the community. (...) It is difficult to say ‘no’ to your neighbor, you know, so I think that if national values are threatened, national values must be taken care of by national institutions (E#22).

It is however important to specify that a critical view on the allocation of management to the Local Management Board was not the case for all the producers of narratives with preservationist discursive elements. A few of them did in fact express approval of both the principle of allocating management to local representatives, and the functioning of the Local Management Board in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell (e.g. B#19, B#37). One of them thought that the Board would

(...) give a good local ownership [of the conservation], which is important in order to loosen up the atmosphere a bit in the aftermath [of the conservation], and I think that that has in fact been the case (B#19).

The same informant was nevertheless critical towards what he referred to as a lack of representative mixture of Board members, given that neither biologists nor representatives from conservationist organizations were represented. In his opinion, this is not in compliance with the high need for competence and balanced knowledge in managing nature values in the area, which is the main task for the Board. Also, he claimed that an important role for the Local Management Board was to be restrictive when allocating exemptions and approvals in order to secure that the biological quality of the area would be even better off in the future. The account of this informant clearly illustrate that the win-win narrative is accompanied by preservationist discursive elements.

“Cabins against Norway’s most important conservation area. That was the real conflict”, one of the interviewed conservationists claimed (E#21). Instead of portraying the forest owners in a romantic way, these conservationists argued that the reason why the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell was so controversial was that the conservation was in direct opposition to potential profits from future construction of cabins. According to these informants, local inhabitants barely mentioned modern cabin industry in public debates because they wanted to portray themselves in a “romantic” or favorable way, namely as ethical managers of nature, driven by sustainable ideals. A curious aspect to this is that several of my local informants accused the conservationists of presenting a “romantic” and superficial view on forests, overemphasizing how unique Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell was with its vulnerable species and outdoor possibilities (e.g. A#23, F#7, F#10, A#18, F#36).

5.2.3 Government Mandated Conservation Necessary Due to Weaknesses of Local Democracy

Another aspect among the preservationist discursive elements was that government mandated conservation was seen as a “necessary evil” if the biological values of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell were to be conserved. One of the interviewed biologists and

an informant from one of the involved conservation organizations argued that the municipalities surrounding Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell are ruled by powerful forest owners and property owners who are overrepresented in the various Municipal Councils (E#20, B#19). Bringing in the poll conducted by Norstat in 2006, where 20% of the respondents answered that they were positive to the two most comprehensive conservation alternatives (Mathismoen, 2006), these two informants argued that there was no one in the Municipal Council to represent the views of these individuals, and hence a democratic imbalance. The situation in one of the municipalities was several times described as a “local dictatorship”, i.e. a poor local democracy, where a “property elite” was the ruling part.

Another informant from one of the involved conservation organizations described some of the politicians in one of the municipalities as generally “highly unreasonable” [*grovt usaklige*] during political debates, accusing them and some forest owners of consciously exaggerating the number of existing shielings and other buildings when reporting to the County Governor of Buskerud (E#20). The same informant also claimed that biodiversity of national value fail to be protected due to the standing command to the County Governors of not overruling the municipalities’ use of discretion, where this is allowed (E#20). This statement implies that proximity between interests and decision-making constitute an inadequate basis for conservation of biodiversity.

One of the interviewed biologists underlined that decisions which are judged to be the best for society as a whole, do not necessarily please everyone (including affected local actors):

One of the world’s biggest problems is that that our ecosystems are being used in an unsustainable manner. And sometimes, we have to say that we cannot continue using this or that area anymore, because nature and biodiversity in this particular area is so valuable that it must be given first priority over economic exploitation. It is not always possible to please everyone. That is indeed quite rare. And for that rather small percentage of land which qualifies for conservation in Norway (...), I actually think that one has to accept that some local actors will disagree in the outcome of the process. I cannot see anything wrong with that. When it comes to larger interests for society, not everyone will get their will. When you are constructing a new road or you are moving a governmental organization or something else, there will always be someone who disagrees. But that doesn’t mean that one should avoid doing it. That is what it takes to live in a society;

if one as an individual wants the benefits of a well-functioning society one must also accept certain constraints and things which the larger community [*storsamfunnet*] find the most reasonable [solutions] (B#19).

Preservationist discursive elements produced by some of my conservationist informants imply that “untouched” nature is seen as the ultimate ideal, interests and involvement of local population are generally ignored and government mandated conservation is seen as necessary to compensate for weaknesses of local democracy. The sole aim with nature management being conservation of biodiversity, possible negative consequences on local population is ignored. The topic of economic instruments for increased local legitimacy for conservation is therefore considered irrelevant. In the following sections, I will refer to the collective narrative produced by external actors as “the Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive Elements” or just “the Win-Win Narrative” for the sake of clarity. The accounts of my external actors are mainly characterized by elements from a win-win discourse type, but some of them also contain the preservationist discursive elements presented in this section.

5.3 Comparison of the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment with the Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive Elements

In this section, I will briefly compare the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment with the Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive elements produced by external informants. The focus will be on my second research question, namely why economic instruments that were brought in on late stages have failed in enhancing legitimacy among my local informants.

According to the Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive elements, the one-time economic compensations and the establishment of the Local Business Development Fund were both important economic instruments in order to secure

enhanced legitimacy for both the conservation process and outcome. According to this perspective, the level of compensations was generous and fair. However, in the accounts of external informants with a more preservationist approach, the economic instruments were given minor attention, as the ultimate goal was perceived as conserving biodiversity.

My findings from Chapter 4 suggest that informants presenting the Local Narrative generally perceived the one-time economic compensations as poor and unfair. Most of my local informants argued that the compensations should have been organized as a yearly rent, adjusted to the fluctuating prices of timber. The establishment of the Local Business Development Fund was also perceived differently by respectively the local informants and the conservationists (see section 4.2.2 and 5.1). Although all of my local informants generally seemed positive to the idea of such a fund, none of them were satisfied with the allocated total amount. They also thought that the fund so far only had minor effect on the situation of local businesses in their respective municipality.

Furthermore, several local informants expressed disappointment with regards to the fund because they initially had expected it to only be directed at the affected forest owners. Most of the local informants also found the direct economic compensations as substantially more important than that Local Business Development Fund. Interestingly, all of the interviewed former and current mayors expressed that they were content with the establishment of the fund. Was this fund established mainly to “please” the local politicians? Could it be classified as a so-called “elite-capture” with the goal being to please the elites, whereas the affected local population were left behind? The fund was clearly not directed directly at the affected forest owners, who were to be compensated through the direct, one-time compensations. According to the Local Narrative, the establishment of the nature reserve was clearly not seen as any win-win situation, but rather as solely beneficial for the conservationists, and at the expense of the local population.

According to Fauchald *et al.*, nature conservation policy in Norway has traditionally been top-down oriented, dominated at the central level by biologists (2011:205). Following Hovik and Reitan (2004), Fauchald states that because nature conservation is weakly professionalised and institutionalized in the municipalities, local-level

policy-making has been dominated by politicians (referred to in Fauchald 2012:205), and decisions on nature conservation are often based on political priorities rather than on scientific and professional considerations. These differences between environmental policy-making at the central and local levels constitute, according to Fauchald, a major challenge to nature conservation in Norway.

As mentioned in section 2.1, win-win narratives seem to ignore the asymmetric relationship between local and external actors whereas traditionalist narratives underline the hierarchical character of binary categories (Svarstad 2009:48). During my fieldwork in Trillemarka, I noticed that the local informants presenting the Local Narrative (with clear resemblances to traditionalist discourses) did portray themselves as “victims” of the powerful and ignorant conservation elites in the cities (mainly Oslo). A local administrative employee who attended quite a few meetings with the affected forest owners provided the following reflections:

I have to say that it was quite a lot of discontent [*gruff og tunghet*] in the assembly. One [the local population] really felt as though one was overrun in what had to do with the process. That was quite a thing to experience, I have to say. They are in a way... The forest owners felt like they were one and one, a bit like a feeling of David against Goliat (A#23).

Producers of the Win-Win Narrative, on the other hand, had a tendency to present the local and external actors in the conservation process as roughly equal parts. Sometimes, the local actors were even referred to as “powerful forest owners” or “greedy local politicians”, i.e. as the more dominant part. The quote below is from a representative from one of the involved conservation organizations:

When governmental institutions have invited to meetings and excursions and such, it has actually happened that the members of our organization were excluded, whereas the representatives from the forest owners were allowed to join. [This was the case] for instance during a helicopter tour (E#20).

Furthermore, my findings indicate that the local population affected was invited to participate only at a “superficial” level until the establishment of the nature reserve was decided upon by the government. As we have seen, Erik Solheim, on behalf of

the government, allocated management responsibilities of the nature reserve to local representatives through the Local Management Board in the aftermath of the inauguration in 2008. This measure, as well as the process leading to the Regulations and the Management Plan were all perceived as including and fair by my local informants. These reflections stand in stark contrast to local perceptions on the conservation process prior to the final conservation decision in 2008.

It is important to underline that I did discover some deviations from the two main narratives discussed in this section. As previously mentioned, some conservationists did for instance support the claim of affected forest owners that the economic compensations should have been more generous. Some also agreed that the allocated amount of 30 million NOK to the Local Business Development Fund should have been higher. But despite some differing views among my conservationist informants on the amount of the two economic instruments discussed in this thesis, the common point was that they perceived both the compensations and the Local Business Development Fund as important tools in order to increase the legitimacy for the conservation.

To sum up, my findings of comparing the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment with the Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive Elements shows that the former implies that economic instruments failed to increase the legitimacy of the conservation, whereas the latter implies the contrary. The actors presenting a Win-Win Narrative perceived the conservation as a win-win situation for biodiversity, local business, affected forest owners as well as outdoor enthusiasts. The actors presenting a Local Narrative, on the other hand, perceived both the conservation process and the outcome as unfair. The main findings of this comparison are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Main findings from comparison of the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment with the Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive Elements

| | | Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment | Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive Elements |
|------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Content | <i>Economic benefits</i> | Too low and inefficient allocation of economic compensations and Local Business Development Fund. The fund only has minor impact. Conservation considered as a cost, representing a threat towards future livelihood of the communities. Economic benefits seen as important, but not sufficient when part of unfair process. | Conservation implied minor economic loss for forest owners, generous compensations and increased tourism opportunities. Benefit sharing through economic compensations and the Local Business Development Fund important for legitimacy among local actors. |
| | <i>Participation prior to 2008</i> | Participation only at a superficial level for local actors. Lack of influence on the conservation process. Collaboration with conservationists is unnecessary and even potentially harmful for sustainable conservation. | Active involvement of the local communities. Conservationists sometimes excluded from participation. Collaboration and involvement with local communities to a certain extent seen as a useful tool for sustainable conservation. |
| | <i>Participation after 2008</i> | The processes related to the Regulations, the Local Management Board and the Management Plan were including and fair. Important with allocation of management to a local board. | The content of the Regulations represents a sound balance between use and conservation. Slightly negative attitude towards local management of the nature reserve. |
| | <i>Conservation</i> | “The best conservation is through sustainable use”. Conservation of culturally contingent species seen as equally or of higher importance than other types of biodiversity. | “Cheese dome conservation” with limited human activity seen as necessary in order to secure the primary goal, i.e. conservation of biodiversity. |
| | <i>Sense of legitimacy</i> | Poor sense of legitimacy for the conservation. In 2012: attitude of pragmatic adjustment and slightly positive hopes for the future despite still difficult situation. | High sense of legitimacy for the conservation. Belief that the local population will fully support the conservation in the future. |
| Structure | <i>Plot development</i> | Decline | Progression |
| | <i>Actors</i> | Villains versus victims/local heroes | Mainly equal parts |

5.4 Conflicting Interests and Interpretations of Conservation in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell

In this section, I will attempt to provide some possible answers to my third research question, namely why the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment is so different from the Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive elements on the same topic.

5.4.1 Conflicting Interests of Conservation in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell

Maybe the most obvious theory as to why the local narratives were so different from the accounts of the conservationists is that the local actors had different interests from the external actors. In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the internal mechanisms of polarized conflicts, Ottar Brox (2000:399) draws a distinction between *differences in importance* and *differences in intensity*. The former refers to a situation in which someone has a practical, instrumental interest in something representing a symbolic interest for someone else. According to Brox, an illustrative example may be conservationists' symbolic interest of conserving biodiversity, which affects local users of the area in a practical and direct manner. Since conservationists mainly have a symbolic interest in conservation, they don't risk as much as the local population and may therefore "go all the way" at a minimal risk (ibid). Differences in intensity may be illustrated by the value of someone's property being more intensive than the same person's interest in collective goods (such as conservation of biodiversity).

For both conservationists and sympathizers with the local population in Trillemarka, various material and non-material interests turned out to be important for why they presented a specific narrative. It seems plausible to assume that non-material interests were more important for the conservationists than material interests. Members of conservation organizations are often volunteering (i.e. their work is not being paid for in terms of salaries), and it does not seem realistic that administrative staff or politicians would lose their paid jobs just because of non-favourable results in one single conservation case. Non-material interests, such as social prestige among

fellow conservationists, may however be perceived as a more important explanatory factor for why they produced a Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist elements. When engaging in a conservation case, the most important reward for the conservationists is often a result deemed as “successful” by the respective group of peers, e.g. the establishment of a comprehensive conservation area. Access to a new nature reserve with regards to outdoor tourism might also be classified as a non-material interest influencing the production of a Win-Win Narrative.

Actors presenting a Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment, on the other hand, are primarily the ones inhabiting the area in question, and thereby being directly affected by conservation due to impacts on economic activities such as forestry, cabin industry and tourism. Their material interests can therefore be characterized as important when explaining why they presented their Local Narrative. According to my empirical findings presented in Chapter 4, non-material interests related to rural identity such as conservation of cultural landscapes, traditional economic activities and sustainable use are also important aspects when explaining the Local Narrative.

5.4.2 Conflicting Interpretations of Forest Conservation in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell

In addition to the interests of producers of the Local Narrative being different from the ones presenting a Win-Win Narrative, the differences between the narratives might also be explained by exploring symbolic aspects of the conservation.

I will in this section compare some of the symbolic aspects related to opposition against wolves in Norway with opposition against forest conservation in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell. The reason for this comparison is the fact that a total of nine informants (forest owners, biologists, representatives from involved conservation organizations as well as Erik Solheim) all brought up the topic of opposition against wolves in relation to Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, without being solicited. These nine informants, constituting one fourth of all my thirty-five interviewees, proved to have strong opinions and interesting reflections on the topic of wolves. I interpreted this as an indicator for possible common conflict cleavages in the Norwegian society between opposition against wolves on the one hand and opposition against forest conservation

on the other hand. This may constitute an important source for explaining the differences between the Local Narrative and the Win-Win Narrative. My hypothesis was strengthened when reading the newly published book *Conflict over wolves. A Sociological Study* by Ketil Skogen *et al.* (2013), where I recognized many similarities from reflections and findings from my own fieldwork in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell. This book, together with three articles on the same topic by two of the same authors⁹ will serve as the main sources of research in the following section. The above-mentioned literature is based on over ten years of research on conflict over wolves in Norway, conducted by the three sociologists Ketil Skogen, Olve Krange and Helene Figari. Due to constraints of time and space, I will limit myself to only briefly introduce this conflict.

After being more or less absent for about 30 years due to extinction, the south Scandinavian wolves slowly started to return to Norway during the 1990's (Skogen *et al.* 2013:27). Their return instantly spurred controversies. In the Norwegian Red List 2010, the wolf is listed as "critically endangered", which is classified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) with the following definition:

A taxon is critically endangered when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of the criteria A to E for Critical Endangered and it is therefore considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild. (IUCN 2001)

The existence of wolves in areas used for grazing or farming is by rural inhabitants often seen as an inherently impossible combination. The wolf poses a threat towards potential hunting game, domestic animals such as sheep and dogs and is even perceived as a threat to human beings, despite the fact that no human being in Scandinavia has been killed by a wolf since 1881 (Linnell and Bjerke 2002).

Skogen *et al.* argue that the controversies on conflict over wolves have to do with a lot more than management of carnivores [*rovdyrforvaltning*] and the practical consequences of the wolves' presence (2013:8). Indeed, they argue that the on-going

⁹ Skogen (2003), Krange and Skogen (2007) and Krange and Skogen (2011)

controversies partially can be explained by the conflict's intersection with well-established and deeply embedded conflict patterns in Norway. In brief, Skogen *et al.* argue that the reintroduction of wolves in Norway represent a symbol of an on-going power shift from the countryside and the primary sector to the growing, well-educated urban middle class (2013:9). During the last decades, most municipalities in rural areas have been characterized by depopulation and increased levels of unemployment, with the primary sector struggling due to low prices on agricultural commodities and economic and political incentives for large-scale industrial agriculture.

About 80 % of the Norwegian population live in urban areas (Miljøstatus 2012). Indirectly, urban citizens are therefore more influential on countryside politics than inhabitants of rural areas in terms of number of votes. Most of the members of Norwegian conservation organizations are urban, high-educated individuals from a growing middle class (Skogen 2003:436). In the eyes of opponents against wolves, this group of people have come to function as a symbol for the negative direction that our society is heading towards, according to research by Skogen *et al.* (2013).

Skogen suggests that the active choice of tradition in the face of ominous change is a significant side effect of modernization (2003:442). Krange and Skogen (2011) have argued that they have found several examples of 'cultural resistance' in the Norwegian countryside in relation to the conflict over wolves. The concept of cultural resistance

takes as its point of departure a relation of power, and it denotes a situation where those who are in a subordinate position make use of cultural means to challenge domination (ibid:469).

Krange and Skogen argue that the prime motivator for this attitude of cultural opposition is a search for autonomy (2011:466). This autonomy does however not entail influence outside the cultural realm. The struggle for autonomy in the work of Krange and Skogen is rather about rural working-class people wanting to uphold traditional rural lifestyles. An example of cultural resistance is represented in the anthropologist and political scientist James Scott's concept of *hidden transcripts*, i.e. discourses created by subordinate groups in opposition to hegemonic cultural forms

and world-views (Krange and Skogen 2011:469). These counter-interpretations represent a critique of power which is generally “hidden” from the powerful, while explicitly defying hegemonic discourses (ibid). The Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment presented by local actors in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell seems to be part of such a hidden transcript, namely a traditionalist discourse on conservation. As we have seen, this local narrative is seldom voiced in national media or national debates without being made fun of or presented in only its extreme versions. Local narratives on conservation being part of a traditionalist discourse tend to be most visible and moderate in the areas directly affected by the conservation.

Regarding rural responses to conservation of private land in England, the distinguished rural sociologist Howard Newby wrote the following in 1980:

It is by no means clear how farmers would react to *any* system which threatened to control their freedom to do as they please with their own land. There is also little evidence to show that farmers welcome an opportunity to become glorified park wardens or landscape gardeners— nor, indeed have they the necessary skills to do so. (...) Farmers still remain suspicious of environmentalists [and] this suspicion runs very deep. It is not simply xenophobia, but a reluctance to admit any other ‘proprietary interest’, including that of the environmental lobby, into the control of private property (referred to in Smout 2000:170).

It seems plausible to claim that Newby’s reflections, to some extent, still are valid today. Traditionalism and rural values were both central in the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment. Informants presenting a Win-Win Narrative on the conservation of Trillemarka, tended to indicate that the affected forest owners could quickly and easily switch from traditional activities of resource extraction to ecotourism and other conservation-friendly economic activities. As we have seen in section 4.1.1, this was clearly not the case. The quote by Newby helps us understand why. Along the same lines, Smout argues that “The quarrel over the countryside is an argument over the limits and rights of property”, which began in the nineteenth century about access to landed private properties, and widening in the twentieth century to include landscape protection and nature conservation (Smout 2000:170). In the accounts of my local informants, respect for private property was a

recurrent (and sometimes implicit) topic. A former mayor in one of the affected municipalities proclaimed that “the private property right should remain strong”, and that one of the explanatory elements for why the conservation process became so controversial, was that forest owners felt that “their private property right was being threatened” (M#14). All of the four interviewed representatives from involved conservation organizations also mentioned the right to govern one’s own property [*råderett*] as one of the core reasons for the controversies on the conservation of Trillemarka.

According to literature review on the wolf conflict in Norway together with my empirical findings presented in Chapter 4 and section 5.1 and 5.2, it seems plausible to argue that the conservation of Trillemarka from the point of view of the local population might be perceived as a threat against the traditional independence of farmers and rural areas’ right to decide over their own future [*selvbestemmelsesrett*]. Indeed, conservation represents a constraint for forest owners who want to live off local natural resources through logging, wood processing and construction of cabins. One of the interviewed forest owners gave the following concerned reflections on the consequences of marginalization of Norwegian agriculture:

Agriculture is becoming so marginalized, so most farmers like me, have a job outside of the farm, and then we do the rest as quickly and simple as possible. We don’t have time for it. So when agricultural business disappears, then what remains is “spare time farms” [*hobbybruk*] and “moonshine farmers” [*måneskinnsbønder*], as we call ourselves. And that is very unfortunate, but I do think it is a consequence. (...) There are no one taking care of traditions anymore, and operating in the same way as before, and then it is the most quadrangular and easy fields which survive, the rest will be taken over by forest. (F#34)

According to the Norwegian Farmers’ Union [*Bondelaget*] the average yearly wage for a Norwegian producer of milk is 324 000 NOK, i.e. two thirds of the average yearly wage for a Norwegian employee (Kristoffersen 2013). None of the interviewed forest owners in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell lived solely off their farm. Indeed, income from several sources [*flersysleri*] was the most common employment situation among Norwegian farmers. A quote from Erik Solheim provides us with

some interesting reflections on why the conservation process became so controversial:

Well, the case [conservation of Trillemarka] grew into very large dimensions, above just being a difference of five hectares in Buskerud, which is a relatively small area in the larger context, in a way it got a symbolic dimension of nature conservation and environmental interests versus protection of rural interests [*bygdeinteressert*] (...)

As partly referred to in section 4.1.1, the interviewed representative from the County Governor of Buskerud answered the following when being asked how he experienced the conservation process:

It has been one of our most controversial conservation processes, indeed. And I guess several factors have played a role here. It is a large area, and with a location where the primary sector and agriculture and forestry historically have been important. We [the County Governor of Buskerud] did a few calculations of estimated losses of full-time man-years, and it turned out that it [the conservation] didn't constitute that much objectively, but I think that the experience has been that it was a heavy intrusion into a region which was already under pressure.

These two reflections both indicate that the conservation was perceived as “the last drop” of external pressures in a region where the inhabitants already felt marginalized by the powerful urban elites.

Based on their studies on the conflict over wolves, Krangle and Skogen have suggested that cultural opposition by individuals from the rural working-class only leads to further marginalization for the same group; culturally, economically and politically speaking (2011). Rural working-class informants in the studies of Krangle and Skogen had a political goal of removing the wolves from their hunting grounds. This would require significant changes in Norwegian environmental policy and legislation, as well as exceptions from international treaties like the Bern Convention (Krangle and Skogen 2011:468). Clearly, these major changes are not realistic to achieve in the near future. Krangle and Skogen also claim that Norway lacks political representatives to voice the opinions of these rural, working-class individuals. One of

the results is that this group is unable to influence a political issue that strongly concerns them. Krange and Skogen have labelled this mechanism of marginalization that may result from ‘victorious’ cultural resistance for ‘the Hammertown mechanism’ (2011:468).

In the case of the conservation of Trillemarka, my local informants also complained that they felt that a powerful, academic elite in the cities, or the larger community [*storsamfunnet*], were ruling over affairs which concerned them, without leaving any room to make a real influence on political processes and outcomes. Three of my local informants applied the term ‘the larger community [*storsamfunnet*]’ when describing the most influential forces in the Norwegian society (M#14, A#23 and F#16). One of them put it this way:

Well, when the larger community [*storsamfunnet*] decide something... It is easier to take a stand the less you know about a case, then you don’t have to make a lot of effort to find out where you stand. The same goes for [decisions for] the future (F#16).

This quote above is one example among a number of indications of a feeling of political marginalization among my local informants, i.e. lack of real democratic influence. This despite efforts to influence both process and outcome of the conservation through activities such as lobbying, participation in public debates, media contact as well as mobilization for an alternative conservation outcome.

A common trait between opposition against wolves and opposition against forest conservation is that involved conservationists tend to emphasize what they label as local actors’ exaggerations, lies or misconceptions of *actual* consequences of the issue in question. One of my external informants talked about “noise” and false complaints, from the part of some of the local actors affected. The informant claimed that the local population argued

(...) that this [the conservation] would have enormous consequences, for instance that the number of jobs in the village would increase dramatically. Sawmills were claimed to be shut down due to conservation. But we [the conservationists] could refute this by proving that only a tiny portion of productive forest in the municipality was relevant for conservation (E#21).

At the end of the interview, one of the forest owners opened up for the fact that the fear of wolves in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell might not be grounded in the concrete threat that the animal was representing, but rather from other (unmentioned) sources¹⁰: “It is not even certain that the wolf is that dangerous, although we are still a bit scared of him” (F#34).

A common belief among opponents against carnivores was that biologists tend to know that the carnivore populations are much larger than they actually claim and that many environmentalists simply are crazy (Skogen 2003:441). During my fieldwork in Trillemarka, a recurrent claim in the accounts of my local informants was opinions such as “Trillemarka is really not that special, it is just an area which has been given a lot of attention by biologists, and the more you look, the more you find” (e.g. A#18, A#7, F#10, F#12, F#32, F#34). Illustrative for the views of several of the local informants, one of the interviewed forest owners put it this way: “So I don’t think it [Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell] is any *special* area. I just think they [the conservationists] have had quite a lot of moles up there” (F#32). By “moles”, the informant is probably referring to biologists and conservationists searching in the field for potential threatened species listed on the Norwegian Red List which could strengthen the arguments for a comprehensive conservation alternative. Furthermore, the conservationists were generally presented by my local informants as voicing a narrow, unrealistic and unsustainable view on nature. One of the interviewed biologists was even referred to with the nickname “the extremist” by several of the local informants. This stood in stark contrast to how the local population projected their own image as modest, rational, knowledgeable and sustainability-oriented.

Forest conservation and the presence of wolves are concrete phenomena which are easier to identify as representing a cause for experienced difficulties in rural areas, compared to more abstract structural changes. They are relatively easy to address, also for individuals without formal higher education (which is the case for some of the rural opponents against wolves and forest conservation).

Opposition against forest conservation and wolves are both prone to a phenomenon which is typically labelled NIMBYism (acronym for Not In My Backyard). NIMBY

¹⁰ See Linnell *et al.* 2002 for more information and research on this topic.

labels “characterize opponents as being able to recognize the value of an unwanted facility as long as it is not sited close to where they personally live” (Fischer 1995 and Wolsink 1996, referred to in Cotton and Devine-Wright 2011:117). Residents revealing NIMBY attitudes also tend to believe that the development in question is needed in society, but at the same time they argue that it should be situated farther away from them. “The project/initiative/development/installation is all right, as long as it is not situated in my backyard or directly interfering with my daily life” is a common expression from individuals presenting this type of attitude. Naturally, it is easy to be positive to both forest conservation and wolves in rural areas as long as it doesn’t affect one’s own immediate surroundings. This argument is also held against people from urban areas being positive to conservation measures or protection of wolves in rural areas.

Several of my local informants in Trillemarka did advocate NIMBY attitudes with regards to forest conservation and the existence of carnivores in their neighbourhood (mainly lynx) and more generally in proximity to farms. One of the interviewed forest owners proclaimed what turned out to be a common view among my local informants

I am not against conservation or predators or anything, I think it is important to have it, but I think that the most important conservation is through use (F#10).

In the accounts of my local informants, representatives from conservation organizations, national-level politicians, biologists and national-level administrative staff were often referred to as ‘(urban) academics’, ‘experts’, ‘political elite’, ‘asphalt elite’, ‘upper class’ and similar expressions. A current and a former mayor answered the following when being asked if there were anyone in their municipality being positive to the conservation process:

M#2: All the decisions in the Municipal Council were unanimous. And that says quite a bit. (...) So we had no local conflicts. It was rather local politics against national politics; it was more along those types of divides. Grass root, and what should I say? Elite. (M#2)

M#3 (interrupting, while laughing): Asphalt!

M#2: Political elite. It was more about that. Much more.

One of the local administrative staff described the conservationists as “an upper class getting on its high horse” (A#18). This description proved valid for several of the local accounts. A representative from one of the involved conservation organizations provided the following reflections:

(...) and then it [the conflict] is maybe more about the group that I belong to as opponents, right, “here, some academics are coming along, right, and having opinions on this! Against us practitioners! They are immigrants to the municipality; they are not living here” (E#20 imitating the rhetoric of a how he perceived the most aggressive forest owners).

Erik Solheim also explicitly compared the wolf conflict in Norway with forest conservation while emphasizing the need to include the local population when taking measures directly concerning them:

At times, even the conservation organizations have shown an arrogant attitude towards local interests, I think, where one from a distance... I am for instance totally in favour of having all the four predators in Norway [wolverine, lynx, wolf, bear], and I think that we should have more of them, but we have to enter into a dialogue with the local population on how to achieve this in practice. We have to accept that people in crisis may be afraid; even though one can continue referring to statistics a million times showing that no human being has ever been killed by wolves in Scandinavia, except for in zoological gardens.

Related to opposition against the on-going power shift from the countryside and the primary sector to the growing, well-educated urban middle class is also the quest for valid knowledge. How should we define valid knowledge? Who are to decide on this? Our society’s belief in scientific expert knowledge, as opposed to traditional lay knowledge was a core topic for the interviewed opponents against wolves (Skogen *et al.* 2013, Krange and Skogen 2011), as well as my local informants in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell (see section 4.1.1). Syse draws attention to a concept named ‘expert systems’ by Anthony Giddens as an example of a disembedding mechanism characterizing late modern society (referred to in Syse 2010:470). Indeed, expert systems remove social relations from their immediate context and separate time from space (ibid:480). Science and technological advances are tightly integrated in the

development of capitalism, and they expand their territory with distribution of abstract systems of knowledge to an increasing number of arenas (Krange and Skogen 2011:482). Expert systems involve everything from global finances and the technologies of industry, to scientific knowledge about the environment. According to Krange and Skogen's interpretation of Bill Martin (1998), this constitutes a basis for the tremendous expansion of the middle class throughout the era of industrial capitalism (ibid). Skogen interpret the dominant discourse of carnivore protection as a typical example of middle-class efforts to shape and correct opinions, attitudes, and practices of middle-class people (2003:442). This development has also contributed to establishing knowledge based on scientific research as dominant in relation to everyday practice. In order for an expert system to function, it is dependent on trust from a certain portion of the individuals and groups being influenced by it. During my fieldwork in Trillemarka, none of my local informants expressed trust in expert knowledge. On the contrary, my findings suggest that what Giddens label 'expert systems' seemed to alienate my local informants from environmentalism rather than including them.

So why is it that the practical, holistic knowledge that the rural informants have about their surroundings fail to be valued in the same way as expert knowledge obtained at universities? According to Scott, there are at least three reasons (1998, interpreted by Syse 2010:478-9). First, doing so reinforces the importance of the experts and their institutions. Second, it is a trait of late modernity to have contempt for history and traditional knowledge. The scientist or expert is associated with the modern whereas the farmer is associated with the past. Scientists therefore tend to think that they have very little to learn from local people. Finally, practical knowledge tends to be represented and codified in a way uncongenial to science. In science, nothing is known until it is proven in a closely controlled experiment (ibid).

Furthermore, holders of expert knowledge, have a considerable power to define what is considered as important in a particular landscape. This was illustrated in section 4.1.1, where local informants portrayed conservation organizations as promoting a "narrow, expert knowledge-based approach" on the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, where 'pristine, untouched wilderness' was seen as the ideal state of nature. As these conservationists were producers of the hegemonic conservation discourse, their ideas of nature are more likely to be promoted in national debates,

media and other influential arenas crucial for the making of public opinion. Referred to in Smout (2000:7), Judith Garitt claims that

Nature conservation has become a discourse between experts, of which locals do not feel part: the “non-experts” feel that their knowledge and perceptions are irrelevant, and that they are denied a role in deciding how the local environment should be used.

This resonated with my findings from section 4.1.1, in which a large majority of my local informants did indeed claim that their own traditional knowledge was being ignored and deemed as inferior to “expert knowledge” during the conservation process. This constituted an important part of the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment.

James Scott argues that any centrally managed social plan must recognize the importance of local customs and practical knowledge if it hopes to succeed (1998). Indeed, he makes a case against “an imperial or hegemonic planning mentality that excludes the necessary role of local knowledge and know-how” (ibid:6). This is in line with what Skogen terms as “an experience of being subject to patronizing attitudes from people who do not know these areas” (2003:441). Scott emphasizes process, complexity and open-endedness, while warning against radically simplified designs for natural environments. Indeed, he makes a case for the resilience of both social and natural diversity. Furthermore, Scott claims that

The relation between scientific knowledge and practical knowledge is (...) part of a political struggle for institutional hegemony by experts and their institutions (1998:311).

In the Greek concept of *métis*, Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant (1991, referred to in Scott 1998:311), have found a means of comparing the forms of knowledge embedded in local experience with the more general, abstract knowledge deployed by the state and its technical agencies. Odysseus was frequently praised for having *métis* in abundance and for using it to outwit his enemies and making his way home. Scott defines the term of *métis* as representing “a wide array of practical skills and acquired intelligence in responding to a constantly changing natural and human environment (1998:313). These skills also include the ability to understand the

adversaries. Activities where *métis* is crucial, is where the skills required are exceptionally difficult to teach apart from engaging in the activity itself (ibid). *Métis* is characterized by an implicit, experimental nature (ibid:315). Following the Greeks (and more specifically Plato), Scott draws a distinction between *métis* and *techne* (technical knowledge). Where *métis* is contextual and particular, *techne* is universal. This means that knowledge in the form of *techne* can be thought more or less completely as a formal discipline (Scott 1998:320). *Techne* is characterized by impersonal, often quantitative precision and a concern with explanation and verification, whereas *métis* is concerned with personal skill, or “touch” and practical results. “The litmus test for *métis* is practical success”, Scott argues (1998:323). Moreover, he refers to a binary opposition between traditional and scientific knowledge, where “high modernism has needed this “other”, this dark twin, in order to rhetorically present itself as the antidote to backwardness” (Scott 1998:331). Scott refers to Michael Oakeshott’s quote of defence of traditionalism rather than rationalism, “The big mistake of the rationalist – is to assume that ‘tradition’, or what is better called practical knowledge’, is rigid, fixed and unchanging – in fact it is ‘pre-eminently fluid’ ” (1962, referred to in Scott 1998:332). Tradition is in fact dynamic, where the changes are likely to be small and gradual rather than sudden and discontinuous. Scott warns against ignoring the radical contingency of the future, and hence missing advices about the future which begins from a premise of incomplete knowledge (1998:343). Furthermore, what he perceives as the most striking about high-modernist schemes is how little confidence they repose in the skills, intelligence and experience of ordinary people (Scott 1998:346). Consequently, he argues that practical knowledge, or *métis*, should play an indispensable role in decision-making.

Skogen agrees with Scott in the need to rethink community based conservation issues, and including traditional ecological knowledge instead of narrowly focusing on scientific-technical paradigms and trust in expert solutions (2003:435). Skogen suggests that joint practical work may diminish some cultural barriers between managers and scientists on the one hand and “anticarnivores hardliners” on the other hand. Involvement in conservation processes normally involves work within a more or less formal system of committees and meetings, where scientific knowledge holds a pivotal position (ibid:436). Groups of affected local population may experience a strong sense of alienation towards formal modes of work as well as academic

knowledge (ibid). The hostility of the hunters and outdoorsmen in the studies referred to by Skogen (2003) was indeed also directed towards

talking (as opposed to *doing*) as a means of obtaining results. Group discussions and formal meetings as a path to consensus may not be well suited to a culture where anti-intellectualism and antiformalism are central traits, and where subordinate (lay, practical) forms of knowledge prevail in direct opposition to dominant (academic, scientific) forms of knowledge and dominant (middle-class) cultural forms (2003:443).

Reluctance and consequently exclusion from formal work modes is illustrated in a quote by one of my local informants in Trillemarka:

Well, if you are to register species, then you have excluded 99,999 % of the population, because then you are at such a specific level that very few have the knowledge to disagree or disprove or have any opinion whatsoever. So if we step up on a more dynamic level, then it is possible to agree, disagree, have opinions and views, because then local knowledge mean something too (A#18)

When leaving one or several concerned groups out of the process, conflicts are likely to persist. What type of concrete measures could be taken in order to ensure real involvement of all stakeholders in future nature management? Skogen suggest ensuring more flexible approaches to management controversies that incorporate non-scientific forms of knowledge and are based on practical work (2003:444). Not only would such efforts lead to reduced friction, but hopefully also to a real triangulation of available knowledge – to the benefit of all parties (ibid). Practical field activities may function as a means to develop common frames of reference and personal trust between all stakeholders. If people work together, they learn to know each other, regardless of their respective backgrounds (Skogen 2003:449).

As pointed out by Endter-Wada *et al.*(1998), social science is essential to ecosystem management because understanding human interaction with nature is paramount to understanding the ecosystems themselves (referred to in Skogen 2003:448). It is important to ensure that culture and cultural power relations are taken into account when planning for nature management in any given area.

In this section, I have discussed different interests and interpretations of the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell in order to provide explanatory elements for my third research question, namely why the local narrative is so different from the win-win narrative on the same topic. Conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell represented mainly a symbolic value for conservationists, whereas the local population had important instrumental and material interests in the area. Additionally, the local population were affected through non-material interests closely related to their rural identity. I have argued that the differences between the two narratives might also be explained by exploring both material and symbolic aspects of the conservation. Opposition against forest conservation and opposition against the presence of wolves in rural areas in Norway may be perceived as symbols incorporated into deeply embedded conflict cleavages causing a growing sense of marginalization. This sense of marginalization is related with difficult conditions for agriculture and local business in rural areas as well as the on-going power shift from the countryside and the primary sector to the growing, well-educated urban middle class. Cultural resistance by rural actors through hidden transcripts may only cause further political marginalization, i.e. what Skogen and Krangle labels ‘the Hammertown mechanism’. I have also discussed the concepts of *métis* and *techné*, and argued that we need to include cultural power relations when planning for future nature management.

5.5 Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment as a result of the Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive elements: Schismogenesis and Expressive Competition

In this section, I will discuss whether the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment was constructed as a result of the existing Win-Win narrative with Preservationist Discursive elements by bringing in a model of communication, namely Ottar Brox' concept of 'expressive competition'. This concept is based on Gregory Bateson's theory of 'schismogenesis'. I will discuss whether it seems plausible to claim that some of the differences between the two main narratives on the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell can be explained by the concept of expressive competition, and finally provide some possible implications for organization of future conservation processes and nature management.

In his article *Schismogenesis in the Wilderness: The Reintroduction of Predators in Norwegian Forests*, the sociologist Ottar Brox has analysed the escalating conflict on the place of large predators in Norwegian forests and pasture lands through the concept of 'schismogenesis' (2000). His purpose was to analyse tendencies towards political polarization as a consequence of some parts' inclination to go "to the extremes" (2000:389). Bringing in Gregory Bateson, the concept of schismogenesis implies that potentially viable compromises are kept out of the agenda (ibid). The antagonism between two parts is maintained and reinforced by stimuli generated through the competition for leadership within each of these fronts. As small disagreements are allowed to generate larger disagreements, the schism between the opponents grows cumulatively, which ends up creating vicious circles (Brox 2000:388).

Certain types of what Gregory Bateson initially called 'symmetrical schismogenesis' is labelled 'expressive competition' by Brox, referring to

(...) the specific form of potentially escalating conflict that may occur when two groups, expressing opposite or conflicting values, confront each other. Each of these groups is characterized by intragroup expressive competition; in such a way that group A emanates messages that stimulate the expressive competition in group B and vice versa (Brox 2000:389).

Both the Norwegian conflict over predators and the conflict prior to the conservation of Trillemarka were characterized by escalating verbal aggression and the prominence of extreme views from both sides of the conflict. This might indicate an intragroup expressive competition. While conducting my fieldwork, I had a growing sense of getting insight into a local crime story with juicy details and exaggerations about the respective adversary group.

In addition to the intragroup expressive competition itself, the media contributed with fortifying both the intragroup expressive competition and the conflict between the two groups by constantly aiming for a tabloid focus on the conservation. When explicitly asking for their opinions, the majority of both conservationists and local informants claimed that they were disappointed with the tabloid approach of the media. One of the involved conservationists complained that

The journalists are aiming for the coolest headings, and they don't mind writing "untouched" although that was not the word you applied (E#26).

A former mayor in one of the affected municipalities also expressed disappointment in media's handling of the conservation case, claiming that

they [the media] were interested in current conflicts, but what *actually* happened, you know, how the history of the conservation of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell will be written, they didn't seem to care that much, because at that time [when history will be written] the train will have passed long ago [Norwegian expression referring to a situation when it is too late for something] (M#15).

Brox underlines that the actors cooperating to produce political schismogenesis do have a certain potential to envisage the aggregate implications of their actions, and modify their behaviour accordingly (2000:390). The schismogenesis model should indeed not be used as a 'diagnostic' device, but rather be applied as an observation tool helping us to discover certain potentialities of conflicts to become self-maintaining as well as locating opportunities for breaking vicious circles.

As we have seen in section 5.4, the conflict over predators has become a strong, divisive political symbol in Norway, rallying forces to what Brox labels “the traditional battle” (2000:392). Brox refers to the political scientist Stein Rokkan’s concept of the ‘centre-periphery dimension’ in our country’s history, claiming that displaying commitment to eradicate predators signifies a strong rural identity and the will to fight for rural causes. Furthermore, Brox argues that the conflict over predators has a consolidating effect for the local community, fighting against a common, external foe, i.e. the conservationist forces in the larger society (Brox 2000:392). He claims that the predator issue is a symbol and a means of expression to a politician with a wish to achieve attention (2000:394). To a farmer, on the other hand, the predator issue represents both a symbol and a concrete economic interest. Based on my findings and discussions in chapter 4 and section 5.3 and 5.4, it is easy to draw parallels between these reflections and opposition against forest conservation in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell.

Both conservationists and rural sympathizers know that there are more conservationists than rural sympathizers in the country, and that the Norwegian Parliament to a certain extent reflects this constellation of interests. But for those who are solely interested in the expressive aspect of this issue, losing the decisive vote after having fought bravely and visibly may be more profitable than negotiating a compromise behind closed doors (Brox 2000:394). As in many other cases of polarised conflicts, the incidences of violent expressions of commitment to the cause tend to be less frequent on the dominating side than among those who seem to lose (Brox 2000:398). Hence, extreme consequences of expressive competition are less observable among protectionists. One of the interviewed forest owners in Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell claimed that the reason why the conservationists tend to achieve the largest share of the media attention is that

they [the conservationists] represent a cooler [*tøffere*] point of view compared to the forest owners. Because we [the forest owners] have just grabbed stuff and gotten well paid and such. But that isn’t true (F#32).

This informant’s claim that presenting conservationist viewpoints generally is perceived as “cooler” than traditionalist perspectives, may indicate that this

viewpoint is being given a hegemonic position among the general public as the most legitimized approach to nature management. Another forest owner claimed that the forest owners lost the “war of the media” [*media krigen*] because they didn’t succeed in communicating that they were not against research per se, but rather the current bias of many of today’s researchers (F#34). According to conservationist informants, extreme consequences of expressive competition were clearly prominent among the local population in the affected municipalities.

Similarly, my local informants also perceived the opinions of the conservationists as “extreme”, but none of them explicitly argued that this “extremism” was a result of intragroup expressive competition. One of the affected forest owners claimed that national media such as NRK¹¹, Dagbladet and Aftenposten¹² often expressed a “populist” and biased attitude towards the conservation, portraying the conservation conflict as “the community mafia against the state, in a way” (F#6). Here, the national media (with a few exceptions such as *Nationen* and other agro-friendly media channels) was being portrayed as part of the conservationist camp, and “the [local] mafia” in the quote above refers to the claim that the municipalities were being ruled by powerful forest owners (ibid).

Brox argues that the practical and instrumental nature of the interests of sheep farmers makes their potential consequences of losing “the battle” larger than is the case for the protectionists with mostly symbolic interests (2000:400). As the sheep farmers know that they are in a minority, they are willing to consider and accept compromises. During the conservation of Trillemarka, the municipalities’ conservation alternative may serve as an illustrative example of such willingness (accounted for in section 4.1.1). None of the interviewed conservationists seemed to even consider a compromise. One of them even said in clear words that the conservation strategies

become a game. (...) I am not interested in the politics, I am interested in the result. And sometimes one has to play some roles in order to achieve things. But I think that politics becomes too much about game strategies and too little

¹¹ NRK is the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, a public government-owned radio and television broadcasting company.

¹² Dagbladet and Aftenposten are two of the most-selling newspapers in Norway

of which goals we are to achieve. Personally, I compare this game to the seesaw [*dumphyske*] where you can place yourself either on the edge or closer to the middle, and you bump up and down. And what you do, either consciously or subconsciously, is that if you place yourself too close to the middle, you become very light in terms of weight. You always have to place yourself a bit towards the edges, and the same is valid in a situation of conflict. If you make a conflict, you have to sit towards the edge of the board in order to become heavier in terms of the politics (E#22).

As mentioned in section 5.4, conservationists do not only tend to think that they can win the battle, but they can more easily afford to 'lose' as well, as "an heroic defeat may be useful ammunition for the next battle in an eternal war" (Brox 2000:400). During my interviews, all of the informants from involved conservation organizations mentioned other examples of areas where nature reserves had been established or where they thought that (parts of) the area should be conserved. One of them mentioned an area where the conservation organization that this informant was part of had been fighting for establishing another nature reserve for a long time, without succeeding. But since there had been so much controversies on the establishment of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell nature reserve, they had decided to put the other area "on hold" for a little while, unless logging "in these unique forests" was starting up again (E#22). This line of argument resonated with several of the other informants from involved conservation organizations, indicating that they perceived different conservations processes as part of a larger picture, where one had to be strategic in order to secure the best outcomes. None of my local informants, on the other hand, mentioned other conservation processes outside of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, unless I specifically asked for it. For those who were directly affected, Trillemarka was the one case that really mattered.

From this observation, Brox deducts that the conservationists have a lot larger room to manoeuvre than the sheep farmers; they can either "go all out, if necessary", or even "restrain their verbal aggression, presenting themselves as more pertinent than their opponents, as the contestant with the 'upper hand' very often can" (2000:400). It is however important to note that this is only part of the picture: Some spokespersons for the forest owners' cause may have expressive rather than instrumental interests in the issue, and vice versa. Academics and biologists engaging in the conservation debate over Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell, giving academic support for

the local population's claim that the area had been extensively used throughout the times, is one example of spokespersons for the forest owners' cause with primarily symbolic interests¹³.

Based on his research on the conflict over predators in Norway, Brox claims that those on both sides willing to compromise seems to be vulnerable to criticism and all kinds of pressure from their more extreme coalition partners, or being rendered less visible in the public space (Brox 2000:401). Based on my research, this observation seems to be valid also for the two main stakeholder groups in Trillemarka. Several of my informants, from both sides of the conflict (e.g F#12, A#18, B#19) all referred to "the community animal" [*bygdedyret*] in the three municipalities, i.e. a phenomenon of group think which tend to discipline inhabitants of a community in thinking the same way about a case, through social sanctions such as social "freeze out" or direct threats. One of the interviewed forest owners defined 'the community animal' as

(...) those who are rigid [*trauste*], stupid, and doesn't understand anything, and I guess that's why the community animal appeared, because I guess that was how the conservationists perceived the farmers, right. Like community animals (F#12).

One of the local administrative staff said the following

Those few [local] souls who had strong [positive] feelings related to the conservation, they were not treated in a nice way during the process. Then, how to say, the community animal or what to call it kicks in and the conditions become a bit too small (A#18).

One of the informants from the involved conservation organizations said in clear words that the conservation organizations fighting for increased forest conservation depend on making 'noise' in order to achieve their goals:

That's our problem, we cannot win through with our opinions if we don't make noise. (...) It's really a shame (...) What protects against more

¹³ One example of academic support for the local population is the article Velvin *et al.* (2010)

conservation is also conflict. And as long as we don't follow up with new conflicts, there will be no more conservation. Then things calm down. And then, nothing will be conserved (E#22).

When debates develop schismogenetically, practical compromises will be kept off the agenda. According to Brox, both sides of the conflict over predators seemed to be dominated by people thinking that showing willingness to compromise is the first step towards defeat (2000:402). Regardless of whether they deserve it or not, government officials do not seem to be respected, trusted or listened to by anybody involved in the conflict; like all other participants, they become a prisoner of the schismogenetic system (ibid). During my fieldwork in Trillemarka, neither my local informants nor representatives from involved conservation organizations showed satisfaction with the roles of respectively the government, the Ministry of the Environment, The Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management nor the County Governor of Buskerud. These agencies all had to balance conflicting interests against each other, and aim for practical compromises securing conservation of biodiversity, low conflict levels and legitimacy for the conservation among the stakeholder groups. Perhaps approving of the work of either of the above-mentioned institutions would have caused social sanctions from the peers among the local population or the members of conservationist organizations?

Brox claims that the theoretical solution to schismogenetic stalemates is making the 'vicious circles' part of a larger, non-schismogenic system (2000:403). In practical terms, this would imply that local population and conservationists should not be allowed to keep the issue of forest conservation to themselves. The challenge could be reformulated in the following way: How can we secure positive involvement of the scattered rural populations in protection of biodiversity and sustainable ecosystems? Brox argues that

biodiversity can probably only be sustained if the protection of fauna and flora is part of plans to improve the condition of homo sapiens (2000:403)

Brox is in other words favouring an anthropocentric approach to nature management, where conservation of nature only can be justified by estimating the future positive

effects for human beings (see section 4.1.1 for further discussion on anthropocentrism related to the Local Narrative). In order to reach practical compromises in nature management, Brox underlines the importance of avoiding that the most militant activists of the two opposing camps continue to control the frames of the discourse, and dominating the public space with “dramatically visible but practically useless messages”(2000:403).

How is this possible to achieve? This thesis does not aim to provide exhaustive answers to these complex problems, but I will nevertheless provide some thoughts based on the analysis of my findings. First of all, it is crucial to increase public awareness on the topic. Encouraging citizens to interpret the information and approaches conveyed through the media with critical glasses is important in this respect. Researchers conducting research on nature management should be given more professional incentives to communicate their findings to the media in an engaging and easily-understandable way. Fascinating stories of both success but also failure in nature management should be conveyed. The government could instruct educational programs for future journalists to include a critical approach on media's role for creating, maintaining and strengthening schismogenetic stalemates. Following the advices from Skogen *et al.*, we should aim for new arenas where both conservationists and traditionalists can unite in finding a sound balance between conservation and use, through measures which take culture seriously.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the Win-Win Narrative with Preservationist Discursive elements produced by external actors, and provided a comparison with the Local Narrative of Marginalization and Pragmatic Adjustment. This comparison suggest that external actors tend to believe that economic benefits have a higher impact on local actor's sense of legitimacy for the conservation compared to local informants. Research on opposition against wolves in rural Norway has been fruitful as a comparative perspective to the opposition against forest conservation in Trillemarka. Both differences in interests and differences in interpretations of what forest conservation signify for affected actors have helped explain the differences between the two types of narratives. Brox' concept of expressive competition has provided some useful tools in analysing the escalating conflict prior to the establishment of the nature reserve. I have found indications of intragroup and intergroup expressive competition among the two main stakeholder groups prior to the conservation contributing to a situation of schismogenetic stalemate between producers of the two types of narratives.

6. Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this study has been to contribute to the ongoing debate on use and conservation in forest management by looking at the case of Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell Nature Reserve. Through social science narrative research, I have studied how involved actors (and particularly the local population) narrate about their views on the conservation and how this has affected their lives.

The study reveals that there is a wide gap between the successful picture presented by external actors and the actual situation of the local actors affected by the conservation. The interviewed forest owners were dissatisfied with both the amount and the form of the one-time economic compensations for their forests. The establishment of the Local Business Development Fund was seen as mostly an “elite-capturing” scheme with minor impact on the employment situation in the three municipalities. This study indicates that these two different economic instruments have failed to produce increased legitimacy for conservation among the local population. In 2012, my local informants were trying to reconcile with both the conservation process and outcome as a pragmatic approach to a difficult situation. My research on opposition against forest conservation in Trillemarka has many similarities with research conducted on opposition against wolves in Norway. They can both be interpreted as symbolic issues for broader conflict cleavages in the Norwegian society. These conflict cleavages are related to the following axes: rural-urban, modern-traditionalist and expert knowledge versus traditional experience-based knowledge. There seems to be a significant gap between rhetoric and practice with regards to local involvement in the conservation process. Rather than a win-win situation where local communities are benefiting from conservation of biodiversity, this study indicates that the establishment of Norway’s largest forest reserve has resulted in fortifying the sense of marginalization among the affected local population. I have explored different interests and interpretations of forest conservation, as well as Gregory Bateson’s concept of schismogenesis, in order to explain the differences between the Local Narrative and the external actors’ Win-Win Narrative. In this thesis, I have argued that it is important that differences in background and perceptions are taken into account when planning for future

economic instruments in conservation processes. Sustainability implies not only including environmental values, but also social aspects of nature management.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Formal letter of consent

Informasjon til informanter og andre nøkkelpersoner

Policymix er et tverrfaglig EU-forskningsprosjekt som pågår fram til 2014. I dette prosjektet studeres effekter av ulike tiltak (bl.a. klassisk naturvern, frivillig vern og økonomisk kompensasjon) for å ta vare på biologisk mangfold og økosystemtjenester i skog. Vårt delprosjekt vil bruke vernet av Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell naturreservat som case, samt ett eller flere tilfeller av frivillig vern i samme område. Mer info om prosjektet finnes under denne lenken <http://policymix.nina.no/Casestudies/Norway.aspx> (vårt arbeide vil inngå i delen som er omhandlet i punkt 3.3). Prosjektet er finansiert av EUs 7. Rammeprogram og ledes fra Norsk institutt for naturforskning (NINA).

I dette prosjektet vil vi intervjuere ulike aktører innen offentlig forvaltning, politisk ledelse og lokalbefolkning som ble og er berørt av vernet av Trillemarka i 2008. Dette for å få en forståelse av mangfoldet av betraktninger som gjør seg gjeldende om temaet i de tre kommunene Nore og Uvdal, Sigdal og Rollag.

De fleste intervjuene vil tas opp på elektronisk lydbånd. Dette forutsetter godkjenning fra hver enkelt intervjuperson. Vi kommer ikke til å registrere navn. Andre personopplysninger registreres bare i den grad de er relevante for temaet som omhandles (yrke, utdanning og lignende). Alle utsagn som refereres i rapporter og intervjuer blir anonymisert.

All lagring av opptak og utskrifter fra intervjuene vil behandles anonymt. Alle har rett til å trekke seg fra prosjektet på et hvilket som helst tidspunkt, også etter at intervjuene er gjennomført. Prosjektets avslutning er planlagt til 31.12.2014. Alle lydopptak vil bli slettet etter dette.

På forhånd takk for velvilje.

Vennlig hilsen

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